Tuesday, December 20, 2011 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 12 P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alert: Text INQ ON (BREAKING) to 4467
INQUIRER 990AM

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SILENT SCREAM This seemingly peaceful seascape is what remains of Bayog Island after rampaging floodwaters from the Mandulog River smashed through it early Saturday morning at the height of Tropical Storm "Sendong." A villa of Barangay Hinaplanon, 3.7 kilometers northeast of the Iligan City poblacion, Bayog is considered the first Christian settlement in Iligan City. Before Saturday, it was home to 341 families. Only 198 families have been accounted for. The rest are missing and feared dead.
RICHEL V. LOPEZ / INQUIRER MINDANAO

'I rode on wave of mud'

'Sendong' disaster foretold 3 years ago

By Kristine L. Alave

THE TRAGEDY that struck the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan was an event waiting to happen. It was foretold three years ago, but was dismissed by lawmakers as "too alarmist."

Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan, chief executive of the the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines (WWF), said yesterday the events in Northern Mindanao over the weekend mirrored the prediction. "It was an exact fit," Tan said.

Environmentalists said a simulation of the effects of extreme

SENDONG | A6

WEEPWARD HOUSE A house rests on a mud by the roadside in Cagayan de Oro City, a mute witness to the power and fury unleashed by Tropical Storm "Sendong."
CAYETANO CONQUISTADOR/INQUIRER

Businessmen quick to lend helping hand

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao and Paola G. Mantesillo

THE BUSINESS community has responded with its own deluge of assistance to the thousands left grieving and homeless by Tropical Storm "Sendong."

Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Smart Communications yesterday said they had sent up to 2,000 units of bottled water and 200 five-gallon containers of potable water to the flood victims in Cagayan de Oro City.

An additional shipment of 2,000 pieces of 1.5-gallon

BUSINESSMEN A6

₱1.3-billion calamity fund ready

THE NATIONAL government, lawmakers, Albay province and Cebu City are extending financial aid to the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan and other areas devastated by Tropical Storm "Sendong."

At least a P1.3-billion calamity fund "will be released immediately" to help ease the plight of the victims of the storm, Budget Secretary Florencio B. Abad said yesterday.

"We are ensuring the quick release of these funds so that victims will receive swift and proper assistance," Abad said in a statement.

He said that with the fund, the government "is generously equipped" to mobilize and support disaster relief efforts in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan as well as other affected areas.

The budget secretary said that separate quick-response funds (QRF) were "adequately supporting" the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of National Defense and Department of Education in their efforts to provide direct and immediate support

P1.3BILLION | A6

P-Noy finds self in eye of storm

By Marlen Ramos and Christine O. Avendaño

IN THE WAKE of Tropical Storm "Sendong," President Aquino has found himself in the eye of another storm.

Users of social networking sites slammed the President after sexy television host Valerie Concepcion revealed in her Twitter account that she performed in a Christmas party of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) at Malacañang Park on Sunday night, which was attended by Mr. Aquino.

The party took place as thousands of people in Northern

P-NOY | A10

Nat'l, local execs debate mass burial

By DJ Yap

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Guillermo Uriarte hung on for dear life as he swam then floated on a wave of mud that carried him from his flood-devastated riverside home in Cagayan de Oro to Macajalar Bay off the coast of El Salvador 20 kilometers away.

He was barely breathing when rescuers plucked him from the sea. He told the hospital he had started to swim at 11 a.m. At some point, he said he was carried away by the current and reached El Salvador 12 hours later.

But the extraordinary escape from death's clutches offered scant comfort to the 32-year-old appliance salesman, as he mounted a frantic search for his wife and three children who got separated from him at the height of the storm.

He was not alone.

On Day 3, as locals continued reeling from the effects of Tropical Storm "Sendong," which laid to waste vast sections of Northern Mindanao, the force shifted from ensuring their survival to finding, retrieving and burying the unfortunate scores

I RODE | A13

Homeless survivors seek shelter, solace in church

By Ryan D. Rosauro and Bobby Lagsa
Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—"Even if it's going to be difficult, we'll stay here," said a school teacher who called herself Virginia or Sen Lorenzo Ruiz Church.

The woman refused to give her real name out of shame for losing her house in Barangay Hinaplanon when Tropical Storm "Sending" struck in dawn Saturday.

As the Inquirer left, Virginia stretched her legs, her back against the church's iron grills, and took a nap in a cramped space she shared with her husband.

This is how most evacuees sleep in this church, which hosts some 200 families, or about 1,000 people, in its 1,000-square-meter hall. Because of congestion, the evacuees sleep on the same spot where they sit.

HOMELESS | A13

North Korea's Kim Jong-il dies; world wary

PYONGYANG—North Korea on Monday announced the death of its supreme leader, Kim Jong-il, and urged its people to rally behind his young son and heir-apparent, while the world watched for signs of instability in a nation pursuing nuclear weapons.

South Korea put its military on high alert as it fears the North's 1.2-million-strong military. US President Barack Obama agreed by phone with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak to closely monitor developments and co-cooperate.

In a special broadcast on Monday from the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, state media said Kim died on a train on Saturday due to a "great mental and physical strain" during a "high-intensity field inspection."

"It is the biggest loss for the party ... and it is our people and nation's biggest sadness," an anchorwoman clad in black Korean traditional dress said in a voice choked with tears.

People on the streets of Pyongyang wailed when they

NORTH A17

NEWS
Palparan stopped at Clark airport / A2

BUSINESS
11-month BOP surplus exceeds 2011 estimate / B1

WORLD
Havel, leader of Velvet Revolution, dies / A26

WORLD
Man in NY says he set woman afire in elevator over debt / A25

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/27 | FOUR DIGIT (Tuesday)
1 7 4 1

6/55 | 29 20 / 7 17 / 30 13
SUERTRES | 6 0 9 / 9 8 0 / 1 9 9
6/55 | MEGALOTTO 6/45
3 15 21 24 31 34
P4,500,000.00
6/55 | GRAND LOTTO
1 3 4 6 30 55
P42,078,229.20

Palparan stopped at Clark airport

By Tonette Orejas and Jon Viray
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—Retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. was barred from boarding a plane bound for Singapore yesterday by immigration personnel who said he was on the bureau's watch list.

Reynaldo Catarman, Clark International Airport Corp. vice president for airport operations, said Palparan was about to check in at 7:30 a.m. for Silver Flight DG7792 at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) here.

Lawyer Carlos Capulong, IO chief at Clark, said Palparan had been placed on the bureau's watch list on orders of Justice Secretary Leila de Lima.

Capulong said Palparan did not insist on boarding the plane or create a scene when Bureau of Immigration (BI) personnel confronted him.

The DOJ had recommended the filing of kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges against Palparan and three other military officers in connection with the disappearance of 10 student activists Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in 2006.

Palparan, however, said the BI's act of placing him on the watch list was illegal.

"There is no new case Lagaitan out in the first place. So why was I placed on the watch list? There was a 60-day search list order in a case while the [DOJ] list that had lapsed," he said in a telephone interview on Monday.

The case at the DOJ involved the torture, rape and abduction of Cadapan and Empeño.

Palparan said he was bound for Singapore where he was to stay for five days until Christmas to see relatives and meet with a business partner.

"Siguradong ako [I am wondering], there really is no case. I was positive the DOJ would side with us. So this watch list is fabricated... The DOJ is [unreliable]," he said.

"[The DOJ] is [being] intimidated and influenced," he added, without elaborating.

"Since there is no basis for stopping my travel, my right to travel [has been violated]," he said.

With the incident, Palparan said he did not expect to get fair treatment from the government.

Immigration personnel at Clark treated him well, he said. "But [my instruction, head] verse [was not correct] because there is no case subpoena," he repeated.

He said he was not shown a copy of the watch list but an immigration agent told him he was also on a "look-out list."

"Sigang ginoh na naman yon [That's a new gimmick]," he said.

Palparan, who was alone, then left the DMIA and returned to Metro Manila.

Two days earlier, Palparan had vowed to face the criminal charges against him.

"I guess we easily cannot trust faces and [their] persons. So I [was] well in a heavily called] protection briefing yesterday at the DOJ.

He noted that Palparan had said he would not leave the country but would face his trial head on.

"He said the other day he was not going to leave and that he would face his case squarely. So what's this? It was surreptitious the fact that his flight was via [Subic]," she said.

'Attempt to flee justice'

Edre Olalia, Cadapan and Empeño's lawyer, assailed Palparan's "manifest attempt to flee justice," describing the retired general "as remorseless as he is cunning and arrogant."

"Flight is an indication of guilt. The poster boy of human rights violations was obviously trying to pull a fast one again," Olalia said in a text message to the Inquirer.

De Lima said that while a 60-day search list order against Palparan had expired, he should have secured a lift order from the DOJ before attempting to leave for abroad.

"Because there was no lifting of the WLO, the BI officer did his. But they could not do exit him because there is no arrest warrant for him," she said.

De Lima said the DOJ yesterday petitioned the Bulacan Regional Trial Court to immediately issue an arrest warrant and hold departure order (HDO) against Palparan. Bulacan was the last place where Cadapan and Empeño were seen.

"We are hoping that the judge to whom the case will be raffled would issue a warrant and HDO at once. He is definitely a flight risk," she said.

Last yesterday, it was learned the case had been raffled off to Judge Teodoro Intanda.

Palace reaction

Malacañang was glad the immigration bureau was able to stop Palparan from leaving the country.

"This is one situation where we welcome the decision to offload General Palparan," presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda told reporters after receiving the retired officer had been barred from leaving the country.

"So yes, we, over the weekend he protested that he was not going to leave the country. Apparently, he lied and he tried to flee," Lacierda said.

He said it was his "understanding" that the watch list order against Palparan had not yet been removed from the computers of immigration officials.

Lacierda underscored the importance of a watch list order, saying that yesterday's incident involving Palparan "goes to show that there are certainly some people who would take advantage of the absence of a watch list order."

Charged with Palparan, then commanding general of the 7th Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command, were Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr., SI Sgt. Hazel Hilario and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio. With reports from Gerimelo Reyes-Enrique, Inquirer Central Luzon; Marlon Ramos and Christine O. Avendaño

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Inquirer tech reporter cited

THE INQUIRER'S Paolo Montecillo, current president of CyberPress, an organization of journalists covering the technology scene, has won the inaugural Intel Tech Educator of the Year Award.

Technology giant Intel collaborated with CyberPress in recognizing excellent work in IT (information technology) journalism and in communicating technical subjects to educate the mainstream Filipino audience.

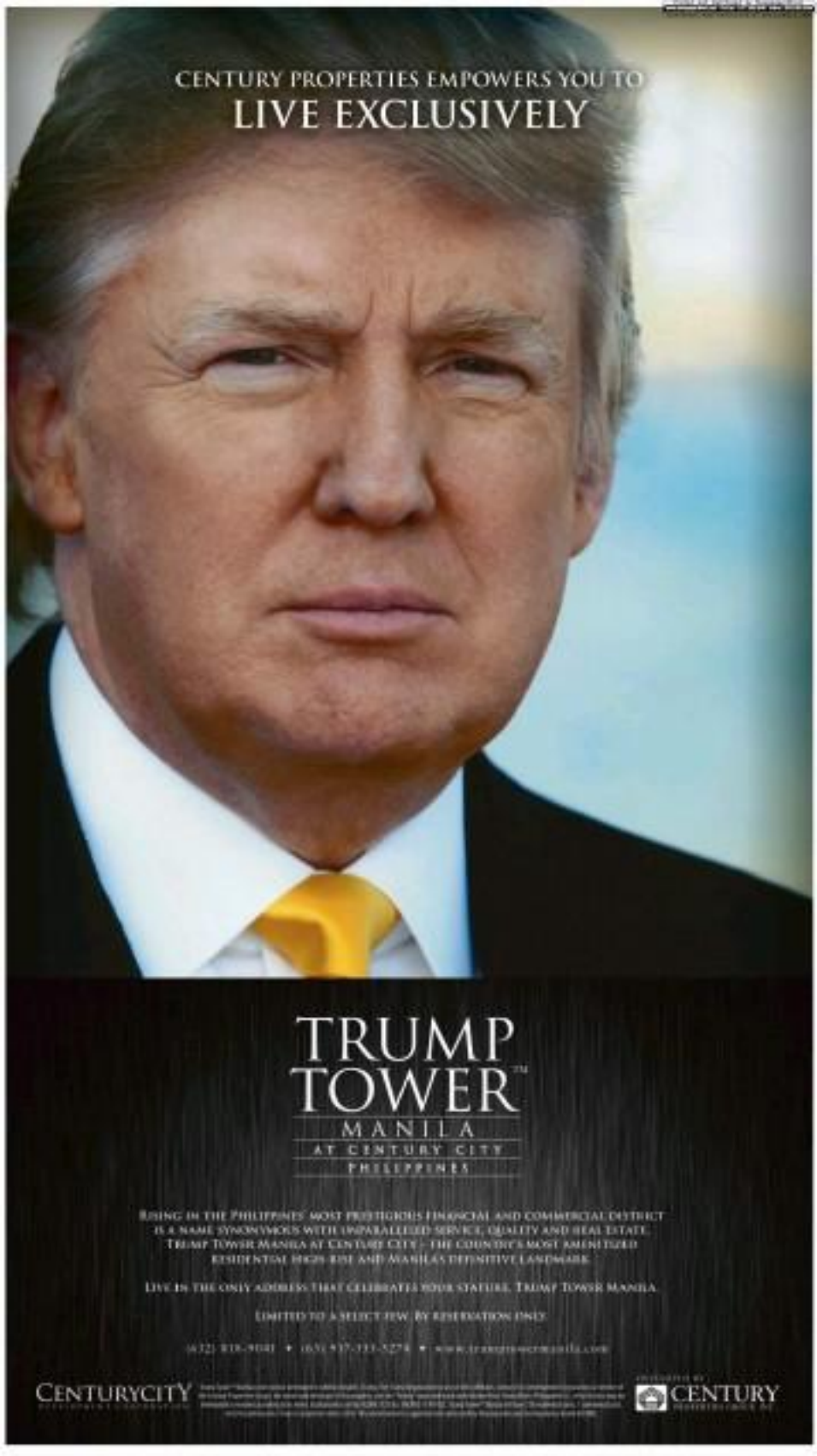
Veteran journalists Roel de Vera, Dondi Arao and Red Mariat were the judges.

The award was handed out during the annual CyberPress IT Awards, where the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Traffic Navigator (TRAV) was named Information Technology Product of the Year.

TRAV is a collaboration between the MMDA and Inventaboard.com, the online news and public affairs arm of broadcast network TV5. TRAV gives motorists free traffic information 24/7.

Other CyberPress awardees were Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers director Judith Duavit-Vazquez, who was named IT Executive of the Year, and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., IT Company of the Year.

Alan T. Ocbemendez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PH, China trade grows despite row

By Jerome Aning

DESPITE the diplomatic spat over conflicting claims in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea), trade between the Philippines and China grew 22 percent in the first 10 months of the year, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Citing a report from the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, the DFA said the growth is made signaled "the continuing robustness of the bilateral economic relations amid weaknesses in the global economy".

General Administrative of China Customs showed that total trade between the two countries reached $26 billion (about P1.14 trillion) in the first 10 months of 2011, a rise of 21.69 percent over the same period last year.

Embassy Charge d'Affaires ad. Ji Chua welcomed the figures "as an indication of the strength, resilience and potential of the trade and economic ties between the two countries."

"The momentum is positive and encouraging for both sides, especially as both countries aim to meet the $80 billion trade goal by 2016, which was set jointly by President Aquino and Chinese President Hu Jintao in September during Mr. Aquino's visit to China," Chua said.

He said the embassy was confident the current trend could be sustained under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)-China Free Trade (AcFta) regime."

From January to October this year, Philippine exports to China topped $14.6 billion (about P638 billion) while Chinese exports to the Philippines totaled $11.4 billion (about P499 billion), expanding by 21 percent and 30 percent, respectively.

At present, trade between the two countries is dominated by electronic and electrical products, industrial parts, nickel and copper, liquefied petroleum gas, fertilizer and cement.

China and Philippine agricultural and agro-processed products, furniture, iron and steel, and logistics-related goods had also made headway in the Chinese market, but exporters had been advised to continue to tap other opportunities other such China's fast-rising incomes and consumption levels and rapid urbanization.

He said Filipino products stood to gain "immense benefits" from the free trade and economic agreements between Asean and China.

Over the past few years, the Asean countries as a group had become among China's top trading partners, with Asean exports to China growing at astronomical rates. China is the Philippines' third biggest trading partner.

Philippine-China trade (trade) reached its high-est level in 2007, with $30.6 billion, before contracting in the next two years as a result of the global financial crisis.

The recovery in bilateral trade beginning in 2010 and a possible strong finish this year augur well for the two countries' economic relationship, which is also seeing newly expansions in key sectors like tourism, investment and development assistance.

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Reds return favor but declare shorter truce

By Delfin Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) yesterday ordered a unilateral cease-fire order to its armed wing, the New People's Army, for the duration of the Christmas and New Year season.

In a statement, the CPP said its Central Committee and all NPA commands and units across the country would stop attacks on police and military forces starting on Dec. 24 up to midnight of Dec. 26 and on Dec. 31 up to midnight of Jan. 2, 2012.

"This ceasefire order is being issued in solidarity with the Filipino people's traditional celebration of the Christmas and New Year holidays," the CPP said.

CPP anniversary

It said the ceasefire would allow the group an opportunity for its "revolutionary masses to join various activities to mark the CPP's 43rd foundation anniversary on Dec. 26."

According to the CPP, the ceasefire order was particularly significant for its 50th unit operating in Mindanao and Visayan provinces which were severely hit by Tropical Storm "Sendong."

"The NPA commands could mobilize their forces to help those who were affected and lent their livelihood due to the storm, it said.

Defensive mode

However, the CPP said the NPA rebels would maintain their defensive mode and continue to remain vigilant during the ceasefire.

The CPP said police and military soldiers "who have no serious hostility other than their unwillingness to desist armed units shall not be subjected to arrests and punitive actions."

Personal visits

"They may be allowed individually to enter the territory of the people's democratic government to make personal visits to relatives and friends," the CPP said.

On Thursday, President Aquino announced an 11-day unilateral ceasefire starting at 12:00 a.m. of Dec. 16 until midnight of Jan. 3, 2012.

Last year, both the government and the CPP, along with its armed wing, the RPA, observed a 19-day ceasefire from Dec. 16, 2010, to Jan. 3, 2011, prior to the resumption of peace talks.

The government and communist rebels have yet to resume talks on the negotiating table months after they first met in Oslo last February under the Aquino administration.

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Palace condoles with Czechs on Havel passing

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By Christine O. Avendaño
Inquirer Research

MALACAÑANG yesterday joined the rest of the world in condoling with the Czech Republic following the death of its former president, Vaclav Havel, on Sunday. (See story on The World on Page A20).

"We mourn the loss of Mr. Vaclav Havel and we offer our condolences to the Czech people on this very, very sad day," presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said.

Lacierda hailed Havel, a dissident playwright in the 1970s, for being "a shining light in the fight against communism."

"He was able to provide leadership during those two-third years and he was able to shepherd the Czech Republic into a democratic republic," he said.

Havel president over then Czechoslovakia's transition to democracy and effective market economy in the 1990s, oversaw Czechoslovakia's peaceful split in 1993 into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

On April 1, 1990, Havel said his wife, Olga, was coming to the Philippines for a four-day visit.

Havel met with then President Fidel V. Ramos and other key Palace officials. Proper protocol was observed, such as Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin and former President Corazon Aquino.

Havel also attended a staging of his 1966 play, "The Memorandum," a satire on bureaucratic gibberish, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

In a press conference after the play, he acknowledged, telling them that they "should not fear to enter politics." With Lauren Dyogi, Inquirer Research

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BOC seizes smuggled firecrackers, lumber

By Philip C. Tubeza
Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE BUREAU of Customs (BOC) has seized two container vans of smuggled firecrackers worth P900-million and eight container vans of lumber which reportedly arrived in two separate shipments.

Commissioner Rolly Sinaon said the two 40-foot vans of firecrackers and pyrotechnic devices which were misdeclared as urband suppliers came from China. The shipment was consigned to PRC Trading owned by Francisco Edward Lopez Chandecon of Kabuti City.

"This is usually the time of year when unscrupulous traders try to make a killing by flooding the market with illegally imported firecrackers and fireworks," Sinaon said.

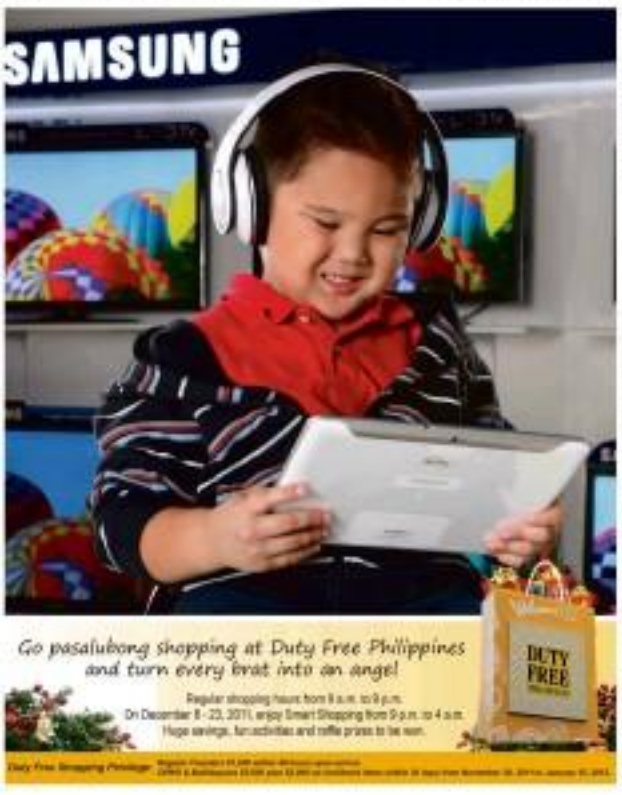
Sinaon said the firecracker shipment was detained at the BOC by PRC Trading's customs broker Adventure O. Ilhan.

He said the shipment was seized by virtue of a Nov. 21 search warrant issued by BOC Port of Manila District Collector Angel Gatchalian for violation of the Tariffs and Customs Code of the Philippines.

On the other hand, the seized container van of lumber which came from Davao City was also smuggled into the Manila International Container Port (MICP).

"They were declared as plastic soaps, fresh banana, coco beans, yellow cornmeals, soapcreal, soycoke, banana chips and corn grits," Sinaon said in a report to Sinaon.

Sinaong said further investigations are under way to determine the identity of the owners of the lumber shipments for the filing of appropriate charges in court.



THE DAILY GOSPEL

DECEMBER 20 (Tuesday)
Psalter: Week 4
4th Weekof Advent
Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
Let the Lord enter: he is the King of glory

1st Reading: Is 7:10-14
Once again Yahweh addressed Ahaz, "Ask for a sign from Yahweh your God, let it come either from the deepest depths or from the heights of heaven."
But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask, I will not put Yahweh to the test."
Then Isaiah said, 'Now listen, descendants of David. Have you not been satisfied trying the patience of people, that you also try the patience of my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.
"The Virgin is with child and bears a son and calls his name Immanuel."

Gospel: Lk 1:26-38
In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
The angel came to her and said, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'
Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.
But the angel said, 'Do not fear, Mary, for God has found favour with you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father and he will rule over the people of Jacob forever; and his reign shall know no end.'
Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be if I am a virgin?' And the angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child; and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible.'
Then Mary said, 'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.
Reflection:
God's love for humanity is such that he became like us, his dear Son. God is the author of the sigh of relief after fulfilling the promise that he will always be with us. His plan has become simultaneously history as part of his plan to save us as much as that our human plans would fit his designs. Like Mary, let us say, let it be done to me as you have said.

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₱1.3-billion calamity fund ready

From page A1

to assess stricken areas.

"We also have the local government support fund shares of all affected local government units, for whose President Aquino will lon Tuesday) provide special allotment release orders and notices of allotment," Abad said.

He said that if additional disaster response funds were required, the national government had set future reserves to augment the calamity fund and QRFs.

Salary deduction

In the House of Representatives, Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. requested mulls of the 280 members of the chamber to donate at least P20,000 of their salaries to victims of the storm.

In a press briefing, Belmonte and House Resolution No. 2017 was already being circulated to House members for signatures as allies in the disaster.

Belmonte and Ako Bikol Rep. Rodel Batocabe said they were donating P100,000 each.

Abagad Rep. Brainer Hataw, Jr. said he was donating his one-month salary on top of the 25 units of rice he had given to victims in Cagayan de Oro, which he solicited through Akbayan Mindanao Rep. Mariano Buddiguan.

The Abo Sirol (ABOS) party-list group said it would donate P250,000 to the victims in Cagayan de Oro.

"The president needs an immediate national response. We have decided to give our all-out efforts, not just as an institution but as individuals," Belmonte said.

He said he would present the resolution in plenary when the session resumes in January "I am sure it will be unanimously endorsed by the entire membership. But we will now advance the amount to be given today or tomorrow," he added.

P1M Vrara park

Belmonte also urged constituents to give P1 million each from their respective Priority Development Assistance Funds, also known as pork barrel, to be used in the rehabilitation of public infrastructure in the devastated areas.

"I am confident our colleagues will support this move," Belmonte said.

Belmonte said the House would also give P1 million to the DSWD and half a million pesos each to the major television networks for their respective donation drives to aid victims of the calamity.

Cebu City donation

The Cebu City government will provide up to P3 million in financial assistance.

Cebu City Mayor Michael Rama said he would ask the Cebu City Council to allocate between P1 million and P3 million, which would be shared by Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and other areas affected by Sendong.

Rama said the Cebu City budget office had certified the availability of P11 million in unused calamity funds.

Mobile energy

He said the city would be sending its mobile morgue to Cagayan de Oro and Iligan to help identify and tag bodies linked over from the towns of neighboring provinces.

In Cagayan City, Gov. Joey Salcedo said Misamis province donated P1 million to Cagayan de Oro and Iligan on Monday.

He said the cash assistance was drawn from the province's calamity fund. Each city will get P500,000.

Albay's gratitude

Salceda, in a text message, said "more than the amount which is modest, the Albay Sendong Aid Mission brings with it the spirit of solidarity and sense of kinship between our peoples," a form of support which he said was "so critical to help them overcome this devastating period."

He said the unit was also an expression of Albay's gratitude to the local government units and the national government for the assistance they gave to Albay when it was hit by past disasters.

A team from the provincial legislative board and the provincial disaster risk reduction and management council is scheduled to leave for the two cities today to consult with local officials and communities on how Albay could further help assuage efforts.

Relief goods

Relief goods worth more than ₱17 million have been contributed to Northern Mindanao to assist families in the devastated areas of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, according to the DSWD.

The DSWD is still welcoming donations. Clothes, mats, blankets and bottled water are among the preferred items. Individuals are also needed in the department's Cagayan de Oro office on Fr. Masterson Avenue, Upper Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City, for the repacking of relief goods.

A total of P12,729 million worth of relief goods from the UN World Food Program, Mapúfilad and the Philippine Red Cross were brought to the DSWD office on Sunday.

Another P4.35 million worth of relief assistance from the DSWD was also brought to the Northern Mindanao office as standby relief assistance.

Earlier, the DSWD said it had prepositioned P317 million in standby funds and 292,400 relief goods with 67 sets of relief supplies for Sendong victims.

Help is also coming from the Department of Transportation and Communications.

In a statement, Transportation Secretary Manuel Roxas II said he ordered the release of P3 million for the victims of the typhoon. Reports from Roxas's PI. Domingo, Cubao to Butuan, Cebu, Iloilo-Salcedo, and Puerto Princesa-Cuyo in Manila, Mar. S. Arguelles, Inquirer Southern Luzon, and Edmon Adan Angeles, Inquirer Visayas

'Sendong' disaster foretold 3 years ago

From page A1

weather events from climate change such as saltwater intrusion, sea level rise and intense tropical cyclones, showed that major Philippine cities, including Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, were at risk of massive flooding.

The simulation of the effects of extreme weather phenomena was drafted in 2009 by the Philippine Integrated for (Climate and Disaster (PICE), PAGASA and Filipino scientists.

"At best, this study provides a very rough indicator of areas that may be more vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, salt water intrusion or a combination thereof," the group's presentation said.

Steven Arnuro, who headed the PICE and currently serves as the presidential adviser for environment, said the simulation showed that the coastal cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan in Northern Mindanao would be ravaged by massive floods from the overflow of river basins and sea level increase.

Mountain range, coast

"Cagayan de Oro and Iligan are vulnerable because they sit near mountain ranges and are coastal areas," Arnuro said. "It would really be bad where a bit more."

The simulation showed that in Cagayan de Oro, the mouth of Iligan River overflowing to cover large parts of the two cities. In Cagayan de Oro, the most affected was the western side, the same area that bore the brunt of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

In Iligan City, the floods would encroach on the city according to the simulation. The happened last weekend, Arnuro said.

Scoffed at

Arnuro said that their findings were scoffed at when it was shown to lawmakers three years ago. "They said I was being too alarmist," Arnuro said.

"I'm not people should be unduly alarmed by the PICE report. "There is the reality," he said.

The head of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said the huge volume of water that Sendong dumped on Northern Mindanao was unexpected.

"The people did not expect this and the government also did not expect this, that we will have 180 millimeters of rain. This is not to the path of typhoons," NDRRMC Executive Director Benito Ramos said on Sunday.

Illegal settlers

Ramos said he saw from his helicopter ride with Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin that most of the victims lived along the river.

"There are many illegal settlers. I hope the city government did not authorize them to construct houses inside the river," Ramos said.

Ramos said many of the victims did not heed the weather bureau's warning about the storm.

Water from mountains

An official of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the rains brought by Sendong were not the main cause of the floods in Iligan and Cagayan de Oro.

"It's the topography. The water came from the mountains, that's why it happened so fast," said Pagasa Deputy Administrator Prisco Nilo.

"The wind not caused by just a simple rain," she added.

Floods due to rains accumulate density, according to Hilario Pacasio from the field showed the flood carrying logs, heavy rocks and debris of mud, an indication that the water came from the mountains, she said.

Swift waves

Sendong moved inland too fast, squeezing the load that the storm normally would be given 36 hours before it starts hit land, forecasters said.

They said Sendong was still outside the Philippine area of responsibility 36 hours before it unexpected landfall on Dec. 16. Pagasa forecasters said Sendong was "too fast," accelerating to 30 kilometers per hour from 19 kph in 24 hours. This did not afford Pagasa 36 hours of lead time for public storm warnings, she said.

Before it entered the Philippine area of responsibility on Dec. 14, the storm was traveling at 19 kph.

By the time it entered the boundary and neared Mindanao, Sendong had already accelerated to 30 kph, said Raymund Ordinario, a Pagasa forecaster.

Several warnings

Despite this, Pagasa said it issued several warnings to public. In the final bulletin that a storm was on its way to Mindanao, a report that typhoons rarely exit, as early as Sunday, Dec. 11.

"There were warnings. Read bulletins. As early as Sunday, there were notifications," Hilario said.

On Dec. 13, Pagasa notified its media partners that a tropical cyclone formed near Guam, which was still too far to affect the Philippines.

On the morning of Dec. 14, Pagasa issued a weather advisory saying that the cyclone was classified as a tropical depression with maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the eye.

The weather system was spotted 1,480 km east of Mindanao, Misamis and was moving west at 19 kph. Pagasa forecast that the typhoon would enter the country by late Wednesday morning or the next morning.

Ordinario said Sendong, the 19th tropical cyclone to enter the Philippines in 2011, entered the country's maritime boundary at around 8 a.m. of Dec. 15.

In to 11 a.m. advisory on the same day, Pagasa issued a severe weather advisory that showed the path of the cyclone and the affected areas. No public storm warning signal was set yet.

Pagasa raised public storm warning signals in Mindanao provinces later that day.

The agency also predicted that the storm would make landfall in Surigao del Sur province on Friday afternoon. It also said that areas that will be under Sendong's 400 km cloud cover should expect 10-20 mm of rain. With a report from Erma T. Cahiles

Businessmen quick to lend helping hand

From page B1

assistance of potable water will follow in the next few days, the two companies said.

Maynilad said it was also sending potable equipment to Cagayan de Oro to produce potable water on site for the evacuees.

"In this time of great need, we gladly extend our expertise and resources to those beyond our concession area," said Ricky Pangan, Maynilad president and chief executive officer.

Manila Water, the other concessionaire serving Metro Manila, set up a mobile treatment plant in Cagayan de Oro on Saturday. The plant is capable of making even flood-water safe for drinking at 3,000 liters per hour, according to the company's corporate communications manager Jeric Sevilla.

Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) said it was donating P300,000 to the victims, to be assisted through TVS Bagsakan Foundation Inc.

"Our hearts go out to the victims of typhoon Sendong. We hope to do our share in helping the victims, albeit in a small way," Marlino Ochoa, MNTC vice president for corporate communications, told the Inquirer.

Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils., which operates a plant employing around 600 people in Cagayan de Oro, distributed three truckloads of Wilkins Distilled Drinking Water and over 2000 cases of Viva Mineral Water to typhoon victims.

The company said it had mobilized its plant management team in the city to help assess the damage to the local community. Over 70 of its workers were left homeless by the calamity, it added.

Samsung Electronics Philippines Corp. donated P2 million to the relief effort, while Shrimbanh Foundation donated by Dr. George S.K. Ty gave P2 million through the local government units and the Philippine Red Cross.

SM Cagayan de Oro offered empty spaces in the mall as temporary shelters for store tenants and employees affected by the storm.

Philippine Business for Social Progress, the largest corporate-led social development organization in the country, donated an initial P500,000.

The amounts, raised from contributions from members and partners, would be released to Iligan City through the foundation's Mindanao regional operations office.

San Miguel Corp. pitched in with 39,440 iron worth of canned goods and water, while Jollibee Foods Corp. donated sacks of rice in partnership with the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro and the Catholic Relief Services.

Free transports

The Jollibee Foundation executive director, Cielito Tiongson, said the company's franchisee in Iloilo, Mimac Food Corp., distributed ready-to-eat meals Saturday to various evacuation centers and would set up processing centers for relief goods.

National flag carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) offered to transport relief goods to Cagayan de Oro and other affected areas for free, and to grant non-cash discounts to those in the industries to bring donations as quick as possible to affected areas. PAL said fly relief goods up to January next year and those affected by typhoon Sendong in Cagayan de Oro and other parts of Mindanao are able to rebuild their lives," said Carmen Gamboloan, PAL Foundation executive director.

Insurance said groups from nearby cities waiting to receive donations may send their representatives to the Cagayan de Oro and Upoing airports to formally accept the goods. PAL said it would prioritize the delivery of small items such as medicines and food items.

Interested parties may contact PAL's foundation through email at tuscha_carmen@yahoo.com.ph.

The shipping industry leader, Negros Navigation, also offered free delivery of supplies to Mindanao.

As part of our contribution, Aspenflora and its employees (in rounds) will be used to assist government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors in sending food, clothes, water and emergency supplies to Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, and Ormoc," said Negros Navigation CEO Isidoro Tagud Jr.

The shipping company has also set up drop-off centers around the country. Donors based in Manila may bring relief goods to Negros Navigation and Super ferry ticket outlets at Robinsons Ermita, Avenues Cesars Cubao and Victory Mall in Caloocan City.

'Libreng tawag'

Aside from accepting relief goods, Globe Telecom said it had set up nine "libreng tawag" centers in the cities of Iligan, Cagayan de Oro and Dumaguete to allow affected residents to make calls to loved ones free of charge.

Smart Communications also opened its own "libreng tawag" and phone recharging centers at evacuation centers and barangay halls in the affected areas in Cagayan de Oro, and Camarigas and Barangay in Dumaguete. Some of the stations also offered free Internet connections.

Smart also called on other telecom companies to check those Smart Money users can transfer funds through their mobile phones to the Ruby Fund (Account No. 9177 5136 9000 1304). Donors may also deposit cash through the same Smart Money account number in any Banco De Oro branch or through Palawan and Cebuana Lhuillier outlets.

Koko's appeal

In an appeal to private donors, Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, a native of Cagayan de Oro, yesterday gave a list of organizations and account numbers that accept cash donations.

These include the Rotary Club of Manila Bay (Banco de Oro-Binondo Office Account No. 8030088134701), and Philippine Red Cross-Cagayan de Oro chapter (PNB Intengs Account No. 280301190881117).

Pimentel said donations can also be made through the office of Archbishop Antonio Ledesma at Cagayan de Oro Cathedral, barangay chair Rolando "Klarex" Uy of Carmen, Cagayan de Oro, and Mayor Lourdes "Lulur (sister of James Ciano) of East Bound Terminal, San Pedro Street, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro.

Pimentel noted that the evacuees, who needed food and clothing, had also requests of cooking utensils and pillows.

And on a grimmer note, the senator also spoke of a pressing demand for coffin, particularly in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan. Widespread from Cathy Rosasan and Rica Oliveros

US senator makes Filipino illegal poster boy for immigration reform

By Nicole U. Bueza
Los Angeles Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—Assistant Senate Majority Leader Richard Durbin has cited the case of undocumented Filipina Jose Libayao in the US Senate to convince his fellow senators to support an immigration reform bill that he had sponsored.

"Because of our broken immigration laws, Jose has been placed in deportation proceedings" said Durbin, who held up a poster size photo of Libayao as he spoke on the Senate floor on Dec. 12.

"60 three years, 16 years in America... a man who is currently working in the health field, in dentistry, who's done such a good job his employers wants to have him here permanently is now facing the prospect of being deported to a country he cannot even remember," Durbin said.

Durbin, the Senate Majority Whip and an ally of President Barack Obama, has been pushing for passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act, which would create a path to citizenship for undocumented people in the United States.

The act seeks to provide conditional permanent residency to undocumented immigrants of good moral character who entered in America as minors, graduates from US high school and lived in the country consecutively for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment.

Libayao received a deportation order from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) two months ago.

Thousands of supporters, led by Libayao's friends and the National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (Nafcon), launched online petitions and an e-mail campaign to halt her deportation. Word of the case reached Durbin, who intervened for Libayao. ICE suspended Libayao's departure for one year to give him a chance to legalize his stay.

One year reprieve

Libayao's supporters said the deportation order was not consistent with the new Obama administration policy to avoid deporting illegal immigrants who were not criminals.

In his speech, Durbin defended the new Obama policy, which some lawmakers had criticized.

"I ask my colleagues who are critical of this administration's deportation policy: Would America be better off if we deported... Libayao to the Philippines?" Durbin said. "I don't think so."

The new policy, issued in a June 17 memo circulated by ICE Director John Morton, would scale back the deportation of undocumented residents who are young students, members of the military, elderly or close family of US citizens, among others, and focus on those aliens with criminal records.

Libayao's lawyer, Amadeo Rabino, declined his 31-year-old client as a Dream Act-eligible candidate who came to the United States lawfully as a child and lived in the country for 16 years. Among the documents submitted to Durbin for his Dec. 12 presentation at the Senate were business articles about the Libayaos case, he said.

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Appeal Pinay's life sentence, gov't urged

By Philip C. Tubeza

A COURT in Kuwait has sentenced a Filipino domestic worker to life in prison for killing an Indian coworker last May, a migrants rights group said yesterday.

Migrante Middle East regional coordinator for Jobs Leonard Monteverde said the Kuwait Court found the 32-year-old woman from Cotabato City guilty and handed down a life sentence, which is equivalent to 20 years in prison.

"The Filipina was charged with murder for stabbing her coworker, a female Indian national, in an incident that happened on May 25, 2011," Monteverde said in a statement.

In court testimony, the Filipina said she and the victim had an argument after the Filipina placed Koranic verses on her DVD player.

The OFW (overseas Filipino worker) confessed that she stabbed her coworker only to defend herself from the latter who attacked her," said Monteverde.

The Kuwait High Court handed down the guilty verdict on Dec. 12, he added.

Monteverde said the sentence could be appealed.

"The embassy hired lawyer must immediately file an appeal for a reduction of her sentence, citing mitigating circumstances such as the self-defense claim of the OFW against her coworker who was the attacker and was bigger than her," Monteverde said.

He said Migrante and Bayan Muna Representative Satur Ocampo have written to Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Ezzedin Tago on behalf of the convicted OFW and her family to request that it file an appeal for reduction of sentence.

Monteverde, meanwhile, praised the commendation given by the United States to the Philippine government for its "exemplary efforts" in protecting OFWs in troubled countries such as Egypt and Libya.

He said the government's "continued neglect" and unpreparedness to provide immediate assistance to OFWs in war-torn countries was exposed.

METRO MANILA

CALOOCAN
Caloocan City - A. Mabini/Caloocan - Samson Rd. Grace Park

MAKATI
Cash & Carry - Pasong Tamo
SM Makati
Southgate Mall EDSA

MALABON / NAVOTAS / VALENZUELA
Tambo
SM Sucat
Valenzuela

MANILA
Central Market - Legarda
Ilaya
Ilaya - Recto
Harrison Plaza
Nagtahan
Pedro Gil Metro - Pedro Gil
Taft Avenue
Taft Avenue - Pasay
Robinsons Place Manila
San Andres
SM City Manila
SM City San Lazaro
SM Hypermarket - Ayala
Sta. Mesa - Bagalangin - Bulacan
Tutuban - Centennial

MARIKINA / RIZAL
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Antipolo - SM Sidmore Antipolo
Cainta - Circumferential Road
Cainta - Junction
Cainta - Rizal Avenue
Marikina - Sumulong Highway
Marikina - Concepcion
Marikina - Lamuan
Marikina - Sumulong Highway
Rizal - Tanay
Rizal - Taytay
SM City Masinag
SM City Marikina
SM City Sta. Lucia Grand Canna
Sta. Lucia East
Pala-Isabela

PARAÑAQUE / MUNTINLUPA / LAS PIÑAS
Alabang - Madrigal Ave.
Alabang - Muntinlupa
Alabang Hills
Bel-Air Village
BF Homes - Aguirre
BF Homes - Parañaque
Las Piñas - Alabang - Zapote
Las Piñas - Naga Ave.
Merville Ave.
Moonbay - Parañaque
Parañaque - Wawawak
SM City Bicutan
SM City Las Piñas
SM City Sucat
SM City Southmall
SM Southmall II
SM Supercenter Muntinlupa
Sunmall - Alabang

PASAY
Baclaran
Baclaran - Redemptorist Road
Buendia - Libertad
Roxas Blvd. World Plaza
SM Mall of Asia A
SM Mall of Asia B

PASIG / MANDALUYONG
Ortigas
Ortigas - Caruncho
Ortigas Ave. Ext. - St. Joseph
Pasig - Caruncho
Pasig - Kapasigan
Robinson's Metro East
Shaw Blvd. - Amang Rodriguez
Shaw Blvd. - Nagpayong
Shaw Blvd. - Pasig
SM Megamall A
SM Megamall B
SM Supercenter Pasig

QUEZON CITY
Aurora Blvd.
Aurora Blvd. - Araneta
Balintawak - Kalookan
Commonwealth
Cubao - Gen. de Leon
Cubao - Kalookan
Cubao - Socorro - Bulacan
Del Monte - Dagohoy - Bulacan
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SM Hypermarket Cubao
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Greenhills Shopping Center - Wilson

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Bonifacio Global City - McKinley Hill
Bonifacio Global City - 5th Ave.
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LUZON

BATANGAS
Batangas - Bauan
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Batangas - Lobaty
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Sampaloc - A. Mabini
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Albay - Rawis
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Camarines Norte - Daet
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Camarines Sur - Naga
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Baliwag - JP Rizal
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Gen. T. Tinio
Malolos - Mabini
Malolos - Mac-Arthur Highway
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Pampanga - Telabastagan
Pampanga San Fernando - Gen. Hizon
San Fernando - Mac-Arthur Highway
SM City Clark
SM City Pampanga A
SM City Pampanga B
Sindalan - Telabastagan
Zambales - Iba

QUEZON PROVINCE
Lucena - Quezon Ave.
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VISAYAS

AKLAN
Banga - Libacao
Kalibo - Pastrana
Kalibo - Roxas Ave.
Kalibo - Veterans Avenue
Kalibo - Osmeña Highway
Kalibo - Tigayon
Kalibo - Tigayon - Roxas
Kalibo - Tigayon - Veterans Avenue
Kalibo - Tigayon - Osmeña Highway
Numancia - Tigayon
Numancia - Veterans Avenue
Numancia - Osmeña Highway
Numancia - Roxas Avenue
Numancia - Tigayon
Numancia - Tigayon - Roxas Avenue
Numancia - Tigayon - Osmeña Highway
Numancia - Tigayon - Veterans Avenue

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2011

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Vice mayor dies 3 days after attack

By Jeannette I. Andrade

TUBOD: days after he was shot three times by an unidentified man on a motorcycle in Pantay City, Vice Mayor Hermenio Maximilian Jr. of Tubod, town in Barangay Hind early yesterday at the hospital.

Doctors of San Juan de Dios Hospital pronounced Maximilian dead at 3:22 a.m.

Police investigators tried to speak with the local official on Sunday afternoon but were told that his medical condition had worsened somehow. He died after he was confined at the hospital's intensive care unit, according to Senior Supt. Melchor Reyes, Iligan police chief.

Maximilian was shot three times on Thursday while he was waiting for his van in front of SM Mall of Asia's Hypermart on Seaside Avenue and Harbor Drive. The assailant fled on a red motorcycle driven by a cohort.

Some members of the vice mayor's family said the attack could have been politically motivated but would not identify any possible masterminds in their affidavits, according to a source who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the matter.

Maximilian, who had served three terms as mayor of Tubod, won the vice mayoral race by a margin of nearly three votes over his closest rival. His electoral victory, however, is the subject of a protest filed before the court in Tubod by Dayo Barangay.

On Aug. 7, 2010, the vice mayor was on campaign his father's investment at the Tubod municipal covered in Barangay Dalisdis when he was shot and wounded in the head by one of two gunmen. His bodyguard, Godfrey Macaraig, 37, was killed.

Following Maximilian's death, Reyes ordered Task Force Tubod to conduct a thorough investigation, aside from close coordination with the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Baroque, to **add footage taken by closed-circuit** television cameras of the attack would be studied further.

P-Noy swears in OICs in ARMM

PRESIDENT Aquino congratulates Mujib Hasanan after taking his oath as caretaker governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Looking on are Hasanan's wife Sitti Djalia Tomawis and their children. (MALACAÑANG)

DBM orders release of funds to 8 towns in Syjuco district

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—The regional administration has ordered the release of P48 million to eight towns in Iloilo belonging to the district represented by Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco, who had claimed that his pork barrel was being withheld by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

The Special Allotment Release Order issued by the Budget Undersecretary Maria Buenaventura on Dec. 13 allotted P8 million each as subsidy to the towns of Alimodian, Leganes, Leon, New Lucena, Pavia, San Miguel, Sta. Barbara and Zarraga.

The financial assistance will be used to fund the repair or improvement of municipal roads and the construction of multi-purpose public markets.

The DBM has also issued Notice of Cash Allocation to the DBM office in Western Visayas on funding for the P40-million allocation.

On Nov. 23, the mayors of the eight towns asked the President in a letter to release Syjuco's annual Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) directly to their towns in the second congressional district.

"We appeal to Your Excellency to release the PDAF to similar amount, divided equally directly to the local government units," they said.

Those who signed the letter were Jaenito Aaron Odiamar, Enrique Rojas (Leganes), Rufino Caplig (Leon), Lionel Dimaculangan Jevilla (New Lucena), Aurelio Guerrero (Pavia), Victor Sadiasa (San Miguel), Dennis Superficial (Sta. Barbara) and Gregorio Bonaza (Zarraga).

"We believe that this fund is intended for the protection of the general welfare and to expedite development in our district ... We will ensure transparency in fund utilization as well as efficient project," the letter said.

Syjuco has complained of the nonrelease of his annual P70-million PDAF since April and has accused his political rivals who are his claimed move close to the President of blocking it.

Syjuco is facing charges for various anomalies especially during his stint as director general of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. He has repeatedly dismissed these as the work of his political rivals.

He said he was one of only five congressmen whose PDAF has not been released by the DBM.

According to him, officials in the administration, including those from the DBM, had confirmed that "there was no order from above" not to release his PDAF.

PRESIDENT Aquino swore in former Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman and Bainon G. Karon, a known Moro women's rights advocate, as caretaker governor and vice governor, respectively, of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Palace officials lauded Hataman's appointment, saying the former lawmaker and friend of the President's, was the best man to head the most impoverished but highly resource areas in five provinces of Mindanao in the next 15 months.

"He knows the politics and the people in ARMM. We believe he could be a person who can galvanize the reforms in the ARMM," Mr. Aquino's spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said of Hataman.

Bought for comment, Maguindanao Rep. Bai Sandra Sema (LP) said that while she has no quarrel for the administration, it would be more appropriate to wait for the final decision of the Supreme Court, where a motion for reconsideration (MR) is pending on the constitutionality of Republic Act No. 10153.

That law empowers the President to appoint ARMM caretaker officials to be in power until the regional polls scheduled in August this year for May 2013 to pave the way for the government to institute reforms in the region in preparation for the next elections there.

The President has instructed the caretaker officials to make sure that the reforms (in the ARMM) are implemented," Lacierda said.

"The reason why we went for a synchronization and also, in particular, the ARMM is to make sure that all vestiges of the past, all the corruption be eradicated and make sure that ARMM ... as envisioned by the framers of the Constitution, by the rotten who drafted the Organic Act—would really path to advance the welfare of the people from the ARMM," he said.

Moreover, Lacierda said Hataman had agreed to a Palace requirement that any OICs to be appointed by the President for the region would no longer run for office in the next ARMM elections set for May 2013.

He said Hataman's appointment was recommended by a search committee led by Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo. Earlier, Robredo said "no ban is violated" by Hataman's and Karon's appointment and assumption to office, as per legal opinion given on the issue by the President's legal advisers.

Last week, Cabinet members of the ARMM gathered around acting Gov. Sinarambin Adiong and swore up with a statement stand to comply with a temporary but only if there was "a final ruling by the Supreme Court on pending MR filed by groups opposed to RA 10153.

Earlier, the high tribunal issued a temporary restraining order to keep officials in their posts despite the scheduled expiration of their terms on Sept. 30. "Until the court rules with finality," according to the court's spokesperson, Midas Marquez.

Senatorial Gandang, a Cabinet member in the education department once, and the metropolitan of Hataman should be welcomed but said if this was done through the legal process. "There seems to be a legal impediment that the Supreme Court has yet to settle before the appointment can take over," said Gandang, former regional solicitor general.

"Building the issue during the coming holiday break that a takeover appears suspicious," Gandang said.

"I still believe in the independence of equal branches of government from the executive down to the legislature and judicial bodies; each has its own role and functions to perform as mandated by the Constitution."

Ali Mastura Ang, ARMM chairwoman Ivanna shot, described Robredo's announcement of the OIC appointments as premature and counting political upheaval.

He said that the region had received a transition memo, which required all regional departments, bureaus and other offices to submit inventories of all properties, assets and liabilities to ensure proper turnover. Reports from Christine B. Avendaño in Manila and Nash B. Mandawa and Chao Tayag in Cotabato

NEWSBRIEFS

■ COTABATO CITY

3 injured in grenade blast

TWO MEN riding on a motorcycle tossed a grenade at a sidewalk stall in Barangay Poblacion 7 on Monday, leaving three persons wounded, said city police director Senior Supt. Danny Reyes.

The 10:30 a.m. attack took place about 30 minutes away from a police military detachment and near the house of Mayor Japal Guiani Jr.

Police and Marines failed to catch up with the grenade throwers who fled toward the nearby predominantly Muslim area.

Tilden Hernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ QUEZON

Arnok kills 1, hurts 3

ONE PERSON was killed while three others were variously wounded where a drunken farmer hacked them in Guinayas town on Sunday night, police said.

Herbert Cabuen suddenly drew his bolo and without provocation attacked Mayra Ilarde, 16; Alma Lacabe, 30; Jessie Lacabe and Sharon Perez, when they were strolling a motorized tricycle, said District Police Office Chief Cesar Binnay, police investigator.

Mayra was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. Lacabe and Sharon were treated for serious injuries. *Delio T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

■ SURIGAO DEL SUR

1 killed in NPA attack

A 63-YEAR-OLD woman was killed and seven soldiers, including a junior officer, were wounded in an ambush by communist rebels in Bislig City on Sunday.

The soldiers from the Army's 75th Infantry Battalion were on their way to Day provinces at the city proper when their truck hit an improvised bomb exploding an interior road in Barangay Mangkilala, Supt. Martin Gamina, spokesperson of the Caraga police regional police said.

Police New People's Army guerrillas posed the killing Julie Lubiano and wounding seven soldiers identified as 2Lt. Michael Pascua, Pfcs(s) Fred Dean Gregorio Pacaya, Alberto Cabalo, Dhane Jay Obsalis, Renan Nillo, Mon Dave Fernandez and Pvt. John de Rosario, according to Gamina.

Fletcher L. Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

A Jesuit priest reacts to the Ateneo School of Government "independent report" recommending a blanket moratorium on mining

'Aanhin pa ang damo kung patay na ang kabayo?'

by FR. EMETERIO BARCELON, SJ

> ***"What future are they talking about? Are they talking of the future of the 20 million citizens of the country who are food hungry today?... Maybe I would not mind deferring decision on mining if we had no hungry mouths to feed."***

MANILA, Philippines — Half-page advertisements in Manila dailies appeared recently purporting to be research "objective and peer reviewed." **But who are the peers who reviewed it? What is their valuation of so-called research? It is safe to presume their peers were academics and not mining entrepreneurs. Can the Ateneo be proud of such research?** (Puzzling is the need to pay for advertising space to publicize their opinion)

That the Ateneo School of Government should recommend a policy from true ivory tower fashion is within their rights. And no one can question the need for cleansing dormant and defective applications for mining applications. However, **to recommend a blanket moratorium on mining from supposed national incompetence is unbelievable.**

To accept such a recommendation to be of any value would be true incompetence. Our legislators have mulled over our mining laws for many years but specially the last 30 years. The rationale for this position is that "the country is not yet capable of accurately measuring the real benefits and costs of mining."

Have other countries been able to accurately measure the costs and benefits of mining (or of industrialization, or for that matter of agriculture, of exports and imports, or a host of other concerns of the economy)? The authors claim to be "a team led by me" but they do not sign the advertisement and hide behind the name Ateneo.

It refers to the "school's extensive work in mining in the last five years." **What mining has the school of governance done? Maybe what is meant is ivory tower theorizing on the mining industry.** Maybe they have done that but that is a weak argument for stopping a whole industry. **And who are they to pontificate on mining just because they think the country is incapable and so effete that it is not even capable of consulting other countries that have mining industries?**

They accuse the government of limitations in accounting to verify benefits and warn against "gambling away our future." What future are they talking about? Are they talking of the future of the 20 million citizens of the country who are food hungry today? Or are they trying to reserve the gold in the mountains for the future of the rich Filipinos to the time when they will be able to do the mining themselves rather than foreigners? These foreigners are providing jobs to feed the poor. Are they equating the hunger of today to a nebulous potential future of rich Filipinos? Maybe I would not mind deferring decision on mining if we had no hungry mouths to feed.

Are we so incompetent and effete that we cannot enforce our laws in responsible mining? That is the premise of the advertised opinion of the Ateneo School of Government. *Ubinam gentium sumus?* The hungry I see today but the future mining prosperity of well-to-do Filipinos that we are supposed to be gambling away I still have to see. How extensive or meager are our mineral resources from their research? Have they done any geological quantitative evaluation of these?

True, we need to "build capacity for governance of responsible mining." As they use to say *"Aanhin pa ang damo kung patay na ang kabayo?"* What do we need mining governance if the Filipino has died of hunger because of our pausing and incompetence? **Incompetence and lack of logic is not insurmountable (except perhaps in ivory towers). To such evaluation of national incompetence I do not subscribe.**

Reprinted by, and through the initiative of, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines with permission from Fr. Emeterio Barcelon, SJ, who regularly writes the column "Voice from the South" in The Manila Bulletin. This column, originally entitled "Missing Statement", was published on December 26, 2011.

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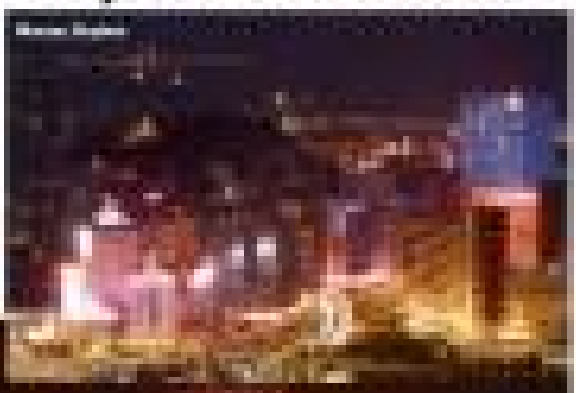

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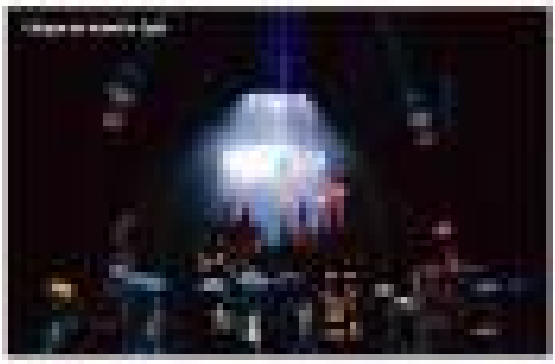

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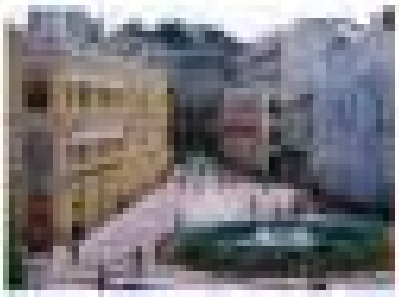

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 27 No. 13
OPINION

Bitter lessons

TROPICAL STORM "Sendong," which crashed across Northern Mindanao over the weekend, might as well have been called "Ondoy 2." The two storms were almost equally deadly and destructive, the factors that made them so fatal were almost the same, and the lessons learned, as well as the things that have to be done to avoid a recurrence of the same level of fatality and destruction are also almost the same.

EDITORIAL

The only differences were that Ondoy struck Luzon, mainly Metro Manila, while Sendong hit Northern Mindanao, principally Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities, and while Ondoy swirled in daytime, Sendong roared in the wee hours of the morning, when almost everybody was sleeping.

The final scorecards: Ondoy: 464 people dead and 37 missing, tens of thousands left homeless, and damage to public works and private property amounting to about P11.1 billion. Sendong: more than 700 dead and the toll still rising, hundreds missing, property damage still to be estimated.

Ondoy dumped one month's worth of rainfall in just six hours, sending floods rampaging across Metro Manila and much of Luzon. Sendong dumped one month's worth of rain over a 24-hour period, but killed more people because the floods struck at 2:30 a.m. when most of the people were sleeping soundly at home.

In the Sendong postmortem, the following factors were pinpointed: the absence of a flood warning, high tide, a false sense of security and the complacency of the people because Northern Mindanao is rarely visited by storms, the hesitancy of the people to leave their homes for fear that they would be robbed, deforestation due to illegal logging and mining, rapid urbanization and heavy siltation of rivers and other waterways.

The absence of a flood warning was a key factor that made both Ondoy and Sendong so deadly. Metro Manilans were used to the occurrence of floods that reached up to the waist, but they were not prepared for a level of inundation that forced many of them to seek safety on the roofs of their houses. People in Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City said there had been floods before, but it was not the first time the rainwater from a storm reached the second floor of their houses.

As in Ondoy there were the human factors in Sendong. People thought that while storms sometimes strike Northern Mindanao, the rains are not so heavy and the flooding is not so deep. While they received the usual weather bureau warning, they were lulled into a false sense of complacency because of past experience. Many of them refused to leave their houses for fear that their belongings would be stolen. It should be distilled into the minds of all the people that nothing is more valuable than human life. In the future, the police and the army may have to carry out forced evacuations.

There are the usual environmental factors: The deforestation of watersheds in Lanao del Norte and Bukidnon, which feed into the major rivers of Northern Mindanao, worsened the effects of heavy rains; Presidential Adviser on Environment Nereus Acosta said. Deforestation, in turn, was caused principally by illegal logging.

Mining, both large-scale and small-scale, also contributed to deforestation, according to Acosta. Rapid urbanization has reduced the capacity of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan to hold water, reducing the area for water runoff and causing the siltation of the Cagayan River.

After the relief and rehabilitation efforts shall have been completed, both the public and private sectors have to give priority to the adoption of a comprehensive action plan to prevent a recurrence of the disastrous flooding. Of course, storms cannot be diverted from their paths. Neither can the heavy downpour that they spawn and the occurrence of high tide be prevented. But can't the weather bureau issue timely flood warnings to give people time to evacuate to higher ground?

Deforestation has to be stopped, and a massive reforestation campaign will have to be conducted to restore the capacity of watersheds to absorb rainwater and prevent it from rushing down to the plains. Rivers and other waterways will have to be desilted to be able to hold the water load during storms.

As usual, we learn our lessons only after many people have died and billions of pesos worth of public and private property have been lost. These are bitter lessons that should prompt both the government and the people to undertake urgent corrective and preventive measures.

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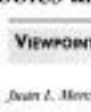
Pebbles and diamonds



VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"THIS IS a real treasure," Northwestern University's Christopher Bazzano told the Inquirer. The 30-million-year specimen is a nearly perfect plate that washed 3,327 Filipinos and their 5,000 children in 30 Metro Cebu barangays for over 28 years now.

Fr. Wilhelm Fliegel, SVD, of the University of San Carlos and the Northern Cement's Horacio Soberano launched the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey (CLHNS) in 1983. USC's Office of Population Studies thereafter built a data base, ranging from birth weight and vaccinations to IQ tests at age 20 for school dropouts.

No national project matches that sustained...and still ongoing...research program. Only South Africa, Brazil, India and Guatemala have bragging rights to similar programs. The span makes investment-oriented analysis possible.

Since then, this research hub underscores nurture of pregnancy, from Unicef's breastfeeding protocols to childhood malnutrition in Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Russian demographers used CLHNS data to assess married women's economic position. The Asian Development Bank used the data in funding early childhood projects.

Protein energy malnutrition sends more preschool children to premature graves in the Philippines than in Bangladesh, India or Pakistan, the World Food Center Development Bank said in their joint report, "Early Childhood Development."

Lack of micronutrients saps intelligence quotients. IQs of ill-fed kids can be shielded from harm by iron-I supplements, an Affirmation study says.

This loss is irreversible. "Their developed will never get to the top floor," Viewpoint noted. "They'll have their lunge be permanently impaired from."

Using CLHNS data, Harvard University researchers estimated that the economic returns from health safeguarded by vaccinations, ranged from 17 percent to 28 percent. The Fliegel study **backstopped the $13 billion Global** alliance for Vaccine and Immunization. The group seeks to inoculate children in 71 poorest countries, against a range of childhood diseases. "The dispassionate economic case for vaccination looks as strong as the compassionate medical one," noted The Economist.

Almost three decades of CLHNS studies make it possible to ask in 2011 questions that span generations. Parents with a OC factors. What predictors are needed so that the next generation of adults can tamp down the rising incidence of high blood pressure, as well as risk for diabetes and heart disease? Birth and growth records of 3,000 survey kids may provide answers.

To determine links between low birth weight and vital Cytoactive protein, Southwestern University's biological anthropologist Thomas McDade studied 1,461 CLHNS babies now grown up.

Increased susceptibility to diabetes and heart disease in adult years, as in Scotland, stems from CRP concentrations. In Bangladesh, effects emerge even in children as young as 5. The same pattern emerges in Cebu, McDade found.

Researchers assumed the potential for catch-up growth after age 2 in stunted babies was limited. "From Cebu, we've learned there is a huge potential to catch up growth in pre-adolescent years," says North Carolina University's Linda Adair.

Cebu data also "reinforces evidence that exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age benefits infants," Office of Population Studies deputy director Judith Borja told a Singapore conference. Complementary foods should not be introduced earlier than six months. Continued breastfeeding until the first two years of life is beneficial.

UP Population Institute's Josefina Cabigon cyubed with Father Fliegel before mid-fold mercury tables. She analyzed Cebu data and concluded: "Other countries have undergone dramatic rises in survival and economic growth...the Philippines faltered and there was a plateau in infant and child mortality levels."

CLHNS revealed diarrhea and respiratory illnesses during infancy lowered scores in math and English in the first two years in school. Children who were "stunted" at age 2 were 11 percent less likely to finish high school and college."

Those who had high marks for age scores as children tended to have higher labor productivity, an analysis of 1,666-2,496 adults entering the labor force found. "What happens early in life has an effect on later life."

"The first two years of life are a window of opportunity when nutrition programs have an enormous impact on a child's development and on their long benefits," the International Food Policy Research Institute notes. After age 2, economic benefits as adults dwindle to zero.

A massive stroke cut down Father Fliegel in 1998. Cebu's "elite" didn't notice his passing. In contrast, thousands thronged Davao's produce zone that Nathan Bydia awoke. "He was the student and later the associate of whom I was president...Of all my students, he went the farthest his toolbox."

Despite his wretchedness, this period "found a parish priest who lived a pauper. Twice a week, he got into his Jesus Volkswagen and drove to a village near Chicago's O'Hare Airport where he ministered to a congregation that saw (the) purposefulness of his work."

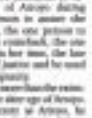
Cebu officials never grasped the significance or value of CLHNS. Cebu's General Hospital fobbed with eighteen-sixty-centenary executives, buying bandages for barangay chieftains, lodging pro bono, etc. Then Mayor Tomas Osmeña sent to his bodyguard, garbled by three messenger changes, was delivered with a Cebu City Chiefed Dog stench.

"But as for Father Fliegel or CLHNS," the Cebu Daily News said, "The blind see no difference between a pebbles and diamonds."

(In 2011, they still don't see.

(Email: jmercado.cebu@gmail.com)

Looking forward



THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S A downside to it.

As the very least, saying Renato Corona for betraying the public trust dismisses from voting Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for betraying the public will. So the next several months, the locus of public attention will not be on the second, it will be on the first. Unfortunately, the government has no choice. Corona is huge roadblock to the democratic renewal. Any government has to remove him before getting on. Arroyo.

Impeachment's drag on, as the case against Joseph Estrada showed, particularly where the senators named judges like in Shrakespear, which they are likely to do with 2013 being election year. Indeed, particularly in this case where Corona will be defended by the best shysters Ill-gotten wealth can buy. Estelito Mendoza may just be there—he has been too high profile of late running law into labotkan—but his clients will be. Any cue dancer who makes the Supreme Court his hobbyhorse, Roque once said, should promptly only become the people asked to ride on it themselves.

At the very least, if Corona's impeachment turns out to be anything like Estrada, Arroyo's trial is bound to be much longer. Estrada's impeachment was so popular it ground the country to a halt every time it was shown on TV and replaced basketball and the telenovelas as the top draw of his time. We haven't had this kind of entertainment (yet, it's that best in a long time. We are going to. Say it up.

When that happens, Arroyo will be shoved to the back burner. She can't have two blockbusters in quick succession, assuming that the Corona trial will get to be quick in the first place. By the time the presidential gets to its turn, a great deal of public interest in the saga would have waned.

I could be wrong, of course, and the train might have the droll life of "The Two Corona Commissioners," which showed in Ealaya for more than a year. But that's another story.

But the upside outweighs the downside.

At the very least, Corona's and Arroyo's chances are intricately linked. Corona's impeachment will be Arroyo's trial in penny form. That is so because Corona is the inner extension of Arroyo. He is a successor of Arroyo during Ilbay's time, the one person to answer the would not be prosecuted, the one person to open a vault for a possible crumbling, the one person to answer that, as in her time, the law can exist independently of justice and be used to enhance the culture of impunity.

It is to memorize because more than the existence of Arroyo, Corona is the image of Arroyo. He drama the same trajectory as Arroyo, he drama the same proportion as Arroyo, Arroyo was a fake president, he is a fake chief justice. Arroyo came to power by the grace of Garci, he came to power by the grace of Arroyo. Arroyo attending to no ends a source of disappointment rather than abolemation tried to be done in the midnight hour, he swearing in too early a source of shame rather than jubilation. Had he done in the midnight hour, Arroyo clung shamelessly to power after being discredited, he clung to power after being discredited to have no mandate from the people.

Corona's fate, which the people will decree if the Senate fails to do its job, would just open the door to Arroyo's fate, it will answer it. Corona falls, Arroyo falls. Which will bring to a full circle, at poetic closure, Arroyo's rise and fall. Her rise to power began with an impeachment, her fall from grace will end with an impeachment.

At the very least, what's at stake in Corona's impeachment is just as important as, if not more so than, Arroyo's trial. Corona's impeachment should particularly highlight a countermand issue that has plagued this country, one that has taken exceptionally vicious form during Macabal and Arroyo's times. That is the use of law to dodge the law, escape the law, or prevent the law. During Marcos' and Arroyo's times—and by extension Corona's time—it has taken the even more grotesque form of wringing rights, making black white and white black, and punishing the good and rewarding the wicked.

If Corona's impeachment goes the way of Estrada's, then it will be an open season on the true power of the law. The people are not fools, after they proved beyond a shadow of doubt during Estrada's trial. A mastermind hide in three-ban Bong was armed with the best lawyers law could buy. They saw through their subterfuge and convicted him. Garci and Joker Arroyo's tale, but that he should fall as simply). Overnight the link vested of to become lawyers again. Overnight the law took on a new face. Again, better to be arrested and absolved. Overnight the law became majestic again, the right hand of justice and not the boot heel of oppression.

Also, all that was birthed away by the coming to power of someone who, after breathing many times over the Philippine History, expand it by doing everything in her power to denigrate it. Someone who would deem she would have the last dealt with cronies by becoming a bigger crook and escaping punishment—all non-sentences who would use the law to stamp out every shred of democracy in its escape.

History has given us a second chance. Corona's impeachment won't just unlock the true power of law once again, showing us what a wondrous thing it is when it is used right, when it is not at the feet of the people, it will give us a chance to keep that power. The impeachment and its aftermath will be taking place under the auspices of someone who benefited doorstep from People Power, someone who has chosen the road from the law drama with cronies by having the right to do so...someone who has chosen the law to restore democracy to this country. So impeachment could be more rule with possibility.

I look forward to it.

How safe are our skies?

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

THE RECENT crash of a Beechcraft eight-seater plane into a clinic area in Pasilingan City that took 13 lives highlights anxieties that few Filipinos want to talk about—until it hits them more directly. This is the issue of governance and management of civil aviation in this country, which has far-reaching implications on Filipinos' jobs, livelihood and safety, well beyond what meets the eye.

Investigations of that crash revealed that the upgrade of the ill-fated plane had violated various rules governing flight operations. The aircraft flew with an unauthorized pilot and without a seniority pilot accompanying the pilot-in-command. The plane's maintenance had expired just a few days before, hence was not covered for damages inflicted on the crash victims. The plane also reportedly had no serial number, and data shouldn't have been registered and granted a license to operate. How a plane could manage to take off at all under such circumstances reflects on the weakness of the regulatory powers in civil aviation in the country, headed by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), formerly the Air Transportation Office (ATO). The CAAP's mandate is to ensure and enforce aviation rules and regulations to ensure safe, economic and efficient air travel.

Back in January 2008, the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), after undertaking an International Aviation Safety Assessment on the Philippines, downgraded the country's aviation safety category 2 from Category 1. The reason that the country does not comply with world safety standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) under the United Nations. The US Embassy subsequently issued a warning to US citizens in the Philippines "to refrain from using Philippine-based air carriers due to serious concerns about the ATO's alleged mishandling of the aviation industry," to effect blacklisting Philippine air carriers.

The ICAO later conducted its own audit in December 2008 that resulted in findings of a significant safety concern (SSC) thereby reinforcing the FAA findings. It cited "super items" or issues most on the implementation of air safety oversight, and in adequate security systems. On March 30, 2010, the European Union, following the FAA's lead, also blacklisted Philippine air carriers and banned Philippine carriers from flying to Europe. Other countries such as Korea and Japan have also used the ICAO, FAA and EU findings as basis for not allowing Philippine carriers to expand services into their respective territories, beyond entering traffic rights previously granted. We have become, in effect, a pariah in the civil aviation community. If it's any consolation, other countries that received a Category 2 downgrade included Israel, India, Nigeria, Yemen, Mexico and Zimbabwe, but I am told they have somehow much more quickly risen so as to win back Category 1 status.

Why should we worry?

Our ICAO non-compliance status is crucial at a time when we could use a massive boost in tourism to create jobs for nearly three million jobless Filipinos. The aspiration to position a country that could readily employ millions of our unemployed, most of whom are young people who have not gone beyond high school. As external revenuing and skills are required for much of the required human resources in tourism service industries, the more we could position the tourism growth boom that would have widespread benefits (a.k.a. "inclusive growth"). A basic rule of thumb is that one foreign tourist brings earnings worth one Filipino job. That is based on the fact that the average foreign tourist spends $1,000, which is about equal to the current average annual income of a Filipino. The good news (spot of a hotel in Cuba told me recently that by his estimate, one hotel guest in fact leads to employment for up to eight Filipinos. Tourism is indeed key to wider economic development and poverty reduction, our close neighbor here long proved it.

But a basic impediment lies in the way: lack of reliable, safe, low-cost access into the country compared to, say Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia) makes it both harder and costlier for foreign tourists to visit us. Our local carriers are constrained by restricting air entry-exits to the country to only a few, the right to fly passengers into our country and beyond, and air policy which has for so long let our weak aviation safety standards provide foreign governments a legitimate reason to close their skies to our own airlines, adherence to airline reciprocity will keep us from providing full loads of potential new jobs through tourism. Finally, our closed aviation system thus has profound implications even for Filipinos who may never once step into an airplane in their lifetime.

What needs to be done? We must begin by taking real aviation governance very, very seriously. The CAAP must not exercise both regulatory and operational functions (e.g., managing airports)—functions that must be kept separate in our context, to avoid conflicts of interest. Indeed, airport management needs to be decentralized and privatized as they are in other countries, so that service and safety standards can be better regulated, with LGAP ensuring that via regulation. The government must make the necessary investments in ample aviation facilities, including radar systems and other air navigation aids. It also needs to pay civilian compensation for the highly specialized skills needed by its staff to avoid "brain drain" of aviation management system. And the time to act was yesterday. We need to do the homework to get back to Category 1 fast. Every day that we spend as a Category 2 country sees the Filipino people dearly.

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E-mail: cielito.habito@gmail.com

Getting there

LAST WEEKEND was an entirely new UH experience for me away from the usual urban setting like Washington, D.C., I went mountain trekking and touring in Virginia.

That sunny Saturday morning, I woke up early to catch the train to Alexandria, Virginia, where a friend was waiting with his car. We drove to the Old Key Mountain in Shenandoah National Park, where I saw fascinating rolling hills, vineyards and forests with red, orange, yellow, brown and maroon leaves signaling the coming of fall. The whole scenery reminded me of my hometown in Bukidnon.

I thought that driving to the foot of Old Key would be easy since my friend had his GPS navigation. But we soon found out that technology could not be depended upon all the time.

We got lost on our way there because we passed on the other side of the park. Hoping to get back to the right name, I tried to consult Google maps on my mobile phone, but there was no mobile signal in the area.

Shenandoah National Park went to Old Key, we were surprised to reach Luray Caverns instead. Inside the cave, we were amazed by the magnificent beauty of the stalagmite and stalactite formations. More remarkably, there was a piano there anchored on the underlies.

Up to this date, there is only one elderly person who can play it. He is already 88 years old, according to one of the guides, and he has to inspect his unique skill to someone younger or no one will be playing the one-of-a-kind piano.

Exhausted yet exhilarated after seeing the beauty of Luray Caverns, we decided to go home. We still had no luck finding the way to Old Key on the GPS. Then, another stroke in why not use the reminders somehow paper map, read the sign boards and ask the locals along the way?

Excited by the sudden inspiration, we followed that old method and reached the foot of Old Key by mid-afternoon. Despite the late hour, we decided to go trekking and complete the whole circular trail within the day.

On the trail, we hiked at a slower pace while enjoying the colorful and beguiling scenery. The trail became more challenging and dangerous. If we are not cautious as we neared the summit. We had to climb, crawl and hold on to the rocks and boulders in order to reach the top.

I am not used to trekking, but by the time I reached the summit of Old Key, I was shouting: "I am on top of the world and I conquered my fear of heights again!"

Going up was hard, but the difficulty was rewarded with the feeling of accomplishment as well as the marvelous views stretching before me. Even on our way down, I was still enjoying the beauty of unspoiled nature.

The experience brought back childhood memories of hiking, resting and swimming in the rivers of Bukidnon and carefree memories spent with friends. But I also realized that times had changed. Now I could no longer enjoy the kind of freedom we used to experience while exploring these gifts of nature.

The old and quiet town where I grew up has changed into a bustling concrete jungle, a messy city. Structures have uprooted everywhere. People spit and throw garbage anywhere. Most of the public lands and mountain where we used to trek during summer and holiday breaks have been turned into treed and bare mountains destroyed by big corporations and the global demand for products like pineapple and bananas. Security is tight around these areas; we cannot go there freely like we used to do before. Even seeing nature at its best in my hometown has become a dream.

But I dream that one day we will be able to reclaim such beauty again so that my children and their children will be able to enjoy the gifts of Mother Nature.

I learned a lot from my trek on Old Key. I appreciate how America can value her and take the responsibility for protecting her so that the present and future generations can enjoy her lively. I also appreciate the fact that Americans have preserved historic quaint and beautiful nooks communities, which I like to visit.

My trip to Old Key also taught me that it is good to have a plan, but it doesn't limit to be flexible in getting through the process and enjoy the surprises that come with it. In real life situations, it is good to have goals, but getting there is often the most exciting part of the learning experience. One should never lose hope, focus and creativity to reach one's destination. There is always much for us to learn from the whole experience of making the journey.

Patrick Henry Ambero, 20, is an Atlas Corps Fellow at the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the United States. He used to work for 700 UH Union Philippines' ABK2 Child Labor Education Project in Bansud and Gloria, Oriental Mindoro.

YOUNG BLOOD

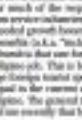
Patrick Henry Ambero

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something set below... If employed, the person you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Murder most foul



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

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THE CA Quijano and Manzanos are bestowing their case on two key pieces of evidence. One is a video filmed by a crew of the TV station UNTV showing the police bleeding off the arrest and lying in wait for the car of the three victims, using high-powered assault rifles to open fire on the car; and later approaching the car to shoot two of the passengers in the head while they were still apparently alive, and planting evidence. The video was widely disseminated to other media outlets and was the talk of the town at the time.

The other is a report by top forensic expert Dr. Raquel Fortun, whose services were secured by the Commission on Human Rights which investigated the case. In her findings, Fortun said "the evaluation of the available evidence on the shooting incident does not support the police allegation that the decedents had fired at them" (who said were a hundred bullet holes found on the car, the case presume from the inside). Even more damning was her conclusion that the victims "were most probably still alive when the second set of shots were fired and could have potentially benefited from medical attention had it existed."

Based on evidence gathered, the CHR found 18 police officers liable for "arbitrary depriving victims" of their lives, and forwarded the case to the Ombudsman for appropriate action. It was from here that the case got crucified to gather dust, for the next five years. That is, until the surprising results of its preliminary investigation.

• • •

BOASTS, at make here, asserts Dedoia, is more than securing justice for three young men killed in the prime of their lives—which is important enough by itself.

"The issues raised in this case are of transcendental importance," wrote Dedoia in his pleading. "If a case is strong as this one—complete with video footage, a thorough forensic evaluation, and the overt admission of the policemen themselves—can be downgraded so easily, what more the other cases where the evidence is good but not as strong?"

The Court probably will not take the matter public to substantiality and impunity. Since 2004, the pleading notes, the country has witnessed at least one "police-rub-out" case a year, and more alarmingly four of the nine "rub-outs" documented by authorities to have occurred within the traffic thoroughfare Ortigas, the same group to which the accused belong. When it is involved in violent encounters, the CHR accuses the police side of being the aggressor and engaging in a firefight. Also notable is the fact that the police officers implicated in this case have also been repeatedly involved in other police "rub-outs."

• • •

BE frequently have reports of gunfights and vehicle incidents involving police surfaced in the media that the Filipino public has grown inured to such shocking events. Not even the death of a young girl and her father whose police-hired speed fired on and killed allegedly during car chase has been enough to rouse us to righteous indignation.

Officials made all the right noises at the time, but the shootings continue.

This is another face of "impunity," and it behooves us to ensure the culprits know they can get away with it.

In letters to Carpio-Morales, much of the delay and suspected shenanigans that took place regarding this ostensibly cheering rush placed the big boy probocooners's heels. But the issues the ombudsman and it is incumbent upon her to look into allegations of tampering with documents within her office, including possibly the resolution filed to exonerate with this case. Only then can we begin to overcome the big hope that accompanied her assumption of the office.

Assistant Rina Jimenez-David is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to rmjdc_ph@yahoo.com, fax 8364434

Still hot news—the RH bill

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maravilla

IF AN open forum, I was asked here/what could be done to be enlightened on the reproductive health bill, an honest admission about a lack of knowledge vs of forbearance to just being "told" what to do. I wasn't satisfied with my answer, unable to do justice to someone's honest desire to know more.

If I could say as a priest sister nun was that Where's too much smell all over the place... a lack of charity and a seeming lack of desire for it." In Congress are the sounds of repeated questions debating as if one proposes as to "built to lack they heard such vibes;" wasting time to create deadlock, exhibiting mediocre minds as in the old time line about Satan being able to contain the world's population. The losers of the Church appear unbecoming, misleading, inflammatory labels, which we have had enough of. "If there is anyone in the Mass here who are [sic] pro-RH bill... please, go out." It's as if mad bias for the fun and is flying in all directions.

In here's trying to help one again.

First, read the bill itself; then some background mentioned here. Then, a recommended bill by Populazon, family Planning and Development collaboratively put together by business groups with the Philippine Center for Population and Development, an informative study on the proposed RH by the Legislative Tribunal of Theology and the John Paul II Center for Biomedical Ethics, and lastly, and up-to-date articles on Moral Theology.

Now, choose the main dimensions/angles as parts under which you find. RH should be examined and matched falling points under each. These considerations the aspects are often interrelated in a cause-effect and reciprocal fashion, having many variables. Let's not agree to adopt the following headings are my choices and the reader may have others in mind.

I would begin with the moral dimension for several reasons. First, it is the mother of all arguments for we are moral beings to the core. Second, it happens in be the main concern of the Church which happens to be the main opponent of RH. Lastly, upon it can rise or fall many of the other aspects.

Catholics may be surprised to find out that "the Church has never explicitly claimed to speak infallible on a moral question." Sorry to disappoint, but the position on contraception is not infallible, it not infallible; contraception may not be intrinsic evil ("always and everywhere wrong"), may or may not be immoral, depending.

Depending on what? Context counts large. Do basically changing context as love catholics, contraception, an every reasonable from financial, academic, socio-economic, religious—name it) is so strong that violating it would be considered as attenuated circumstances of motive, intention and conscience are weighed in. Under such "circumstantial" and "case in case" examination, RH becomes greater or lesser degrees of right and wrong. One size does not fit all. Burke a moral development in the pope.

The next heading—government's concern—is the legal constitutional angle. Legal eagles Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J. and Raul Pangalangan have written excellent columns in this paper. They can guide through the intricacies of freedom to choose, rights to "privacy," access to information, the use of public resources, etc.

A third but very controversial heading is the scientific dimension. All the fuss it generates may become moot as the beginning [and end] of life (conception, fertilization, implantation, cessation) biological being, human being) may in time be determined like sex or earth as source of our survival.

Flowing from the scientific is the medical-pharmacological angle. Examine the slippery slopes about contraception leading to abortion and to managing levels of cancer and even blindness, at night follows day; with the term preferring a child "will" to a other "may." Who ought them to take?" my husband quips. What's so "new" about an honest list of medicines that are abortifacients and those that are not and their side effects?

Very serious because of its cumulative effect on the nation is the socio-economic angle. Invited is the correlation between poverty and population; possible if one talks of beneficiaries, the United States is the biggest beneficiary, but one has to be blind not to see its ravages in our poor country, its news people per square meter, even if stretched, truly a nation's wealth? "Population management" isn't evil. How many make a country rise when half of its people are poor? Applicable here is the observation of Alvin Toffler in the hoax of a demographic winner of old people? Malus Bingahan of found Weather Station can tell you.

The woman's angle, deserves its own niche. "No women should die giving life." So unanimous and so true. Add to it a realist based text (par. 19, "None," whose husband is jobless, is on her sixth pregnancy with one child dead. Visuals for us," "grow up moves to," 93 the millions like her that need help. Sadly. Hear the sides of mom, feminists, social workers.

How hopefully can this help the gentlemen attended?

• • •

Asuncion David Maravilla is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to marila_ph@yahoo.com, fax 8364434

THEY SAID

Jail for GMA

"The punishment is very clear. It should be in a detention cell of a government institution by law. We will not agree if it is a private hospital. We will not agree if it's her residence. We will not agree to house arrest."
—Commission on Elections chair Sixto Brillantes Jr., on former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's detention

Lessons on chastity

"There is a need to educate the people about chastity to avoid irresponsible sexual behavior and [pressure] Malacañang to issue an executive order.
—Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo on the Catholic Church's advocacy on chastity and Muslim among students in the last one to stop the spread of the sexually transmitted HIV in the country

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LETTERS

A victory for defenders of human rights

MORE THAN five years after the disappearance of Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan, the Department of Justice, finding probable cause, has approved the filing of kidnapping and illegal detention charges against retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., Lt. Col. Felipe Anoño, M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio. Finally, Palparan and his cohorts in the military will be tried in court in connection with the disappearance of two UP students.

The hailing of Palparan to court is long overdue given the many crimes he committed against activists and those fighting against injustice. While this is just the start of a long and rigorous trial to hold Palparan accountable for his crimes, this is a significant victory for human rights defenders, and a big step toward ensuring respect for human rights in a country that has witnessed horrendous human rights violations in the past decade.

As long last, justice has caught up with Palparan and his ilk. The BOO mentality needs a strong, clear and loud message to human rights violators: They cannot hide for ever; rule-of-law must prevail and the door to no other place for them but behind bars. This should help put an end to the climate of impunity, the collapsing of the anti-insurgency policy of the past that has no regard for human rights and the law.

We call for the immediate arrest of the perpetrators and demand that the new AFP generals and other victims of enforced disappearances be enforced. We shall resolutely pursue our goal to make the respect for human rights, like former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and other top civil, military and police officials, accountable for their high crimes against the people.

—ERNEST E. OLAGUE,
secretary general,
National Union of Peoples' Lawyers,
nupl2007@gmail.com

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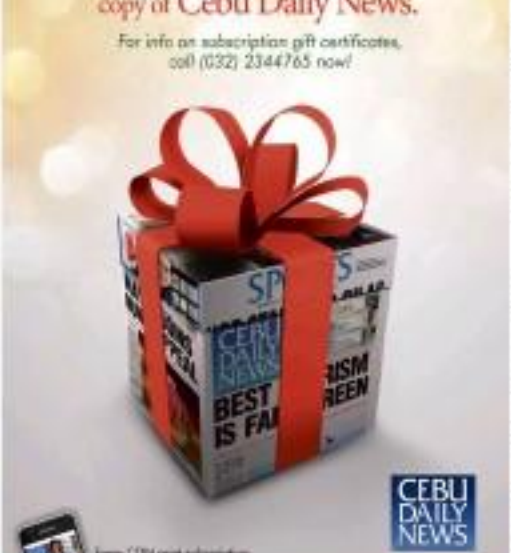

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CEBU DAILY NEWS

INQUIRER

K-SWISS IS THE TALK OF THE TOWN

The iconic California performance and lifestyle brand, K-Swiss, opens its doors on December 22, Thursday at the 2nd Floor, Garden Wing of the Alabang Town Center.

Southern-based fans of the brand can now browse the store's cutting-edge footwear and apparel of Griffin-tee sport and style. Known for its original all-white leather tennis shoe, the Classic, K-Swiss has earned its prestige for innovation, quality, performance, and style both on and off the court. Today, K-Swiss' premium sports heritage has expanded from tennis footwear, to also lifestyle, running and training footwear that stands up to the performance demands of world-class athletes and trendsetters alike.

K-Swiss' launch into triathlon catapulted the brand's performance footwear as one of the most sought-after running shoes in the running and triathlon scene.

The K-Ona, an ultra-light stability running shoe with a seamless upper construction continues to be a crowd favourite, especially used for fast days and races. The Ventsky Blade-Light, also described as "The K-Ona in steroids" has been a bestseller ever since its debut in stores. The Ventsky Blade-Light boasts of the Blade-Light cushioning with side stirrups, a seam-free upper for comfort, and non-wash hydrophobic technology for state-of-the-art water resistance to keep the shoe light.

K-Swiss is currently the brand of footwear and apparel of three-time Cobra Ironman 70.3 Filipino Elite Women's Champion, Monica Torres, and also for renowned triathlon teams, Bike Ring Philippines and the Triathlon Association of the Philippines.

K-Swiss stores and [illegible]

K-SWISS SUPPORTS TRIATHLON

Clever and powerful always had their way

I HAVE to applaud President Aquino for having the courage and principle to hold a position against the Supreme Court in session.

Too often we have seen how close in our nation, having had the wherewithal to place themselves in positions of supreme authority, whether those positions be done over ambition, personal purposes.

Isn't it the reason we as a nation are so much as it? Isn't it the reason we can recognize it when we see it?

So from the grand tradition musically initiated by the Church's enough their faults, we can face forward to illness and mortal loss face forward again to forgiveness and to find that is magnificence, and finally come to the same Corona said his Court. The question always asked and never answered is, "where will this end?"

It is only when we still people to success. This is what Pilay is doing and, more importantly, this is what we want him to do. That in fact is his mandate—if he does anything else but this kind of thing, most of us would be happy given the secret of his predecessor.

Go through all the arguments and just do what's right because, let he me bring, the clever and the powerful have had their moments long and our country has had no champion to stand against power injustice.

While our institutions of us may in the guise of **rule majority**, I'll accept the champion, in lieu of the unwary.

May your tuning label. Dejesi ting na kata pla mahi-ing na mo.

—ATI MENDOZA
jose.mari@ymail.com

Poblador's group has CA ruling on its side

THIS IS in response to the letter of Edmund L. Palmer, who styles herself as director/CEO of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. or PHC. (INQUIRER, 11/14/11)

The law that the group of Bildner has no right or authority to represent PHC" is a declaration made by the Court of Appeals in its Resolution in CA-GR SP No. 116377, promulgated on June 30, 2004. The court made this declaration even as it took into account the ruling of the Regional Trial Court of Makati City in Civil Case No. 94-1949, which was cited by Bildner in fact, the Court of Appeals and the decision could not be construed as a right but merely as a matter of fact.

Significantly, Bildner admitted that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) upheld the validity of the stockholders' meeting conducted by our group in 2004. It is illogical to insist that the declaration was "to be construed "by the Court of Appeals and rendered moot by the alleged Philcomsat meeting conducted by the Bildner group in November 2007. Since the meetings of our board were upheld in 2004, obviously, it is only this duly elected board that can validly call any meeting of Philcomsat in the succeeding years.

Bildner does not have any authority to call any meeting of Philcomsat. Moreover, Philcomsat is a separately existing corporation with a government-owned corporation. The nominees of government can still have to be duly installed in the board in a meeting called by our legitimate board.

The claim of Bildner that the appointments of more government nominees in 2007 and 2010 effectively invalidated the meetings already upheld in 2004 is equally illogical. Again, it is only our board, whose election was upheld in 2004 by the SEC and the Court of Appeals—as admitted by Bildner—that can approve Philcomsat and call meetings of the corporation.

The legitimate board of Philcomsat, which I represent, is not distinguishing and undersold the administration. If nominees are appointed to Philcomsat, then they should be installed in our legitimate board.

It is unfortunate that Bildner's group has been able to mislead the public, third parties and even government agencies as to the authority of our board. The fact that our board continues to operate the affairs of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) in allowing the Bildner group to install one reflected in the minutes of PSE. Moreover, the decision of the PSE in allowing this listing, to their base disclosed, is based on the erroneous implementation of the court's decision cited by Bildner, without due consideration of the facts of the case and the issues, above mentioned circumstances. We continue to rely on the findings of the SEC and the Court of Appeals.

The group of Bildner, which refuses to turn in customers Prudencio Somera, has consistently filed harassment lawsuits against the members of the legitimate board in many venues, and engaged them in a smear media campaign. If they are really confident of their alleged "legitimacy" then returning to such tactics would be unnecessary.

—CONCEPCION L. PINLAGAN,
chair, Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC),
vice president, PSE and Philcomsat

Corona's resignation will boost high court's image

CORONA DECIDE Quino Tres. I column, cited "Senga," a to suspect members are against the Supreme Court, often cited disparagingly the "Kimpo Cruz." It is rich in irony, full of wisdom and reflects a profound appreciation of history.

"There's something disgusting about the way Cielito Mucapaal-Arroyo justice failed at former Secretary Leila de Lima last week. What's disgusting about it is not that they should set in judgment over De Lima and our rulings like, 'The way you interpret the law shows that you are most powerful than the court.'" **—Quino Carino**

I have read some of the exchanges between some justices and De Lima, as quoted in the newspapers, and I cannot but agree with De Quino that some of the magistrates were insulting, frankly pompous and, indeed, unbecoming.

I fear justices may be losing their humanity.

Does Dennis Jernando de Castro demand De Lima over why she issued a hold-departure order against Arroyo when it was the court that cut so-can this order? Why cited the filing of the information against Arroyo when it was the court that [illegible]?

De Lima replied that she was only being "careful" for she would be blamed had Arroyo, who is facing several high-profile cases, [illegible] since to leave the country and did not return. It was accurate to say that you will be blamed because the Court has already assumed that responsibility by issuing the TRO." De Castro even [illegible].

Did De Castro ever think that the Court could have spotted [illegible] people present against the tribunal, which could lead to calls for the impeachment of the justices? In my opinion, [illegible] if Arroyo was able to leave and doubled away to some [illegible]. That could be a serious setback for President Aquino's "daang matuwid" reform program, a campaign pledge in the 2010 election, which he won [illegible] overwhelmingly voted into the presidency.

Chief Justice Renato Corona's resignation could repair the sagging image of the tribunal and help restore the people's trust and confidence in the Court.

If the vote of the Chief Justice on cases involving Arroyo has been consistently in favor of his fellow Ilonggo, he would not escape public perception that he is biased for the former president. In 38 such rulings of the Court, Corona has voted in favor of Arroyo.

There is now a petition by a group of citizens calling for his inhibition in future hearings on Arroyo's cases. He should bring the gift of doubt before their more snowballs.

I hope that the Chief Justice Renato de Castro who storage and writings can inspire our people to develop a strong sense of public involvement in good governance. I invite more people to reaction.

—LANCE SUEVARIA,
bandonne_lance@live.com.ph

Why is this major highway named after Marcos?

PRESIDENT AQUINO has decided that the remains of Ferdinand Marcos should not be buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani and the late dictator does not deserve full military honors. He has given his final word on the matter before the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the antagonist's son, criticized President Aquino on the issue of Marcos' burial. He said that the President missed the opportunity to unify the nation by refusing to have his father's remains interred at the Libingan ng mga Bayani and by denying him full military honors.

The result is that the Marcos family is now in step with the majority of our countrymen. The Marcoses refuse to admit that martial law was bad for the country. They refuse to admit that many Filipinos suffered during the dictator's rule. And so why, the Marcos have not yet been formally recognized by the government as victims. No apology has been issued from administration have they been compensated by their own government, as admonished by Persons human.

In terms of this, Marcos Highway, which connection through Mt. Kiba, Pasig, Cainta and Antipolo, should be named after another Filipino more deserving of one's honor than the dictator. Imagine, nothing is major road after a man who robbed the Philippine treasury and ruined with his personal rule! We will have the ire of future generations of Filipinos if we will not repudiate the name "Marcos" from this major roadway.

The National Historical Commission and its relevant government agencies should take the initiative in renaming Marcos Highway.

—QUINTIN ADRIEL,
Barangay San Agustin,
San Fernando, Pampanga

North Korea's Kim Jong-il dies; world wary

KIM Jong-il

learned the news that their "dear general" had died of heart failure at the age of 69.

"How could they become he so cruel? Please come back, general. We cannot believe you're gone," shouted an unnamed woman dressed on North Korea's official television, her body shaking wildly.

"He passed away too suddenly to our profound regret," said a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News agency. "The heart of Kim Jong-il stopped beating, but his noble and cogent name and benevolent image will always be remembered by our army and people."

Kim, who reportedly had a taste for cigars, cognac and prostate statistics, is believed to have suffered a stroke in 2008.

Succession

While there was no immediate statement on official succession, there were clear indications that Kim's 20-something son, Kim Jong-un, would be in charge.

The North said in a dispatch that the people and the military "have pledged to uphold the leadership of comrade Kim Jong-un" and called him a "great successor" of the country's revolutionary philosophy of juche, or self-reliance.

The death could set back efforts by the United States and other countries to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions, because the untested successor may seek to avoid any perceived weakness as he moves to consolidate control, according to some analysts.

South Korea has expressed concern over the news. A parliamentary official, Lee Kyu-taek, said he was thinking of stocking up food in case of soaring military tensions even as some analysts said Kim's death was unlikely to plunge the country into chaos because it already was preparing for a transition.

Kim Jong-il indicated a year ago that his little known third son, Kim Jong-un, would be his successor, putting him in high-ranking posts.

But another analyst said an internal power struggle could break out between Kim Jong-un and his aunt's husband, Jang Song-thaek, who was elevated in the government last year and likely would be given a significant role in the new administration.

"Tension will arise between Jang and Kim Jong-un, because Kim will have no choice but to share some power with Jang," said Ryoo Kihl-jae, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, which is in South Korea.

The North said it would place Kim's body in the Kumsusan memorial palace in Pyongyang and that his funeral would be held on Dec. 28. No entertainment will be allowed during a 10-day mourning period, and the country will accept no "foreign delegations hoping to express condolences."

South Korea's President Lee urged his people to remain calm, while his Cabinet said the public must convene emergency meetings. The defense ministry said the South Korean military and the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea bolstered reconnaissance and were sharing intelligence on North Korea.

Close monitoring

The White House said in a statement that it was closely monitoring reports of Kim's death. "We remain committed to stability on the Korean peninsula, and to the freedom and security of our allies," the statement said.

The Obama administration may postpone decisions on reengaging the North to see how cadre and providing it with food aid, US officials said.

Washington had been expected to decide on both issues this week, possibly as early as Monday, but the officials said Kim's death would likely delay the process. The officials spoke on conditions of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

For 17 years, Kim Jong-il led his nation through a devastating famine while frustrating the United States and other global powers with his on-again, off-again approach to talks on giving up nuclear arms in return for food and other assistance.

His longtime pursuit of nuclear weapons and his military's repeated threats to South Korea and the United States stoked worries that fighting might break out again on the Korean peninsula for the fourth time since the 1950-53 Korean War.

The Korean War ended more than 50 years ago in a ceasefire, but the two sides remain technically in a state of war.

Rise to power

Kim Jong-il took power after his father, revered Stalin-like Korean founder Kim Il-sung, died in 1994. Few Kim facts, however, are available when it comes to North Korea, and not much is clear about Kim Jong-il, the man known as the "Dear Leader."

North Korea listed his birthplace as a mountain cabin on Mount Paektu, one of Korea's most cherished sites, in 1942, a birth he stoked in the heavens by a pair of rainbows and a brilliant new star. Soviet records, however, indicate he was born in Siberia, in 1941.

His father, who for years fought for independence from Korea's colonial ruler, Japan, was a base in Russia, emerged as a communist leader after returning to Korea in 1945.

With the peninsula divided between the Soviet-administered North and the US-administered South, Kim Il-sung rose to power as North Korea's first leader in 1948. He installed Stalinist ideology with a cult of personality that encompassed him and his son. Their portraits hung in every building in North Korea, and every divided South Korean meant a Kim Il-sung lapel pin.

Kim Jong-il, a graduate of Pyongyang's Kim Il-sung University, was 32 when his father anointed his heir-presumptuous.

Even before he took over as leader, there were signs the younger Kim would maintain—and perhaps exceed—his father's hardline stance.

South Korea has accused Kim of masterminding a 1983 bombing that killed 17 South Korean officials visiting Burma, now known as Myanmar. In 1987, the bombing of a Korean air flight killed all 115 people on board, a North Korean agent who confessed to planting the device said Kim had ordered the downing of the plane. AP

Tragedy clouds CDO girl's victory in GMA-7 talent search

BIG winner Krissa Mae

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

TWO DAYS after deadly flash floods left a swath of misery across Cagayan de Oro City, one family still found itself with a reason to celebrate.

Seventeen-year-old aspiring singer Krissa Mae, who hails from the city's Barangay Tablon, topped the GMA-7 reality talent search "Protégé," beating contestants from all over the archipelago.

But Mae considered her victory somewhat bittersweet, noting the widespread devastation wrought by Tropical Storm "Sendong" on the very people who had cheered her on throughout the competition.

Her own family was safe, she said, but on Saturday, a day before the Protégé grand finals at SM Mindi of late, she learned that her uncle Ismael Abella was a casualty of the flash floods.

"I feel devastated," she told the Inquirer on Sunday night after winning the contest. "Still so high and everyone was so happy when I last visited (Cagayan de Oro) last week. Seven had evacuated and passed by my old school."

"Then, days later, the floods came. It's as if my happiness was snatched away from me in an instant," she said, noting that a storm of such magnitude rarely visited her city.

"My common manager (singer Alex Siguenza) decided to tell me about what happened because she thought it would be sinful to me if I wasn't informed immediately," she said.

She said she planned to help in the relief efforts when she comes home this week, as a volunteer for the Philippine Red Cross and UNICEF Pilipinas Foundation.

"She was strong enough to handle the situation," Siguenza explained. "She has grown so much throughout the six-month competition."

Hailing round favorites Love Jo Imbarcadio from Davao and Liezle Fernandez from Iloilo, Mae won P1 million in cash and a condo unit from Suntrust Ashdown Tambisan. The three finalists also won scholarships at ITI computer school and a five-year contract with GMA artist Center.

Siguenza maintained that Mae's win not because of the "sympathy vote" for Cagayan de Oro but because of her sheer talent.

"I don't think it was because of the tragedy. Krissa was never a front-runner because of the cute ones. The judges' positive comments boosted her scores," Siguenza added.

TV director and manager Jimi de Leon, who sat on the panel of judges, also explained: "Although we sympathize with the people of Mindanao, the tragedy has no bearing on the judging. From the start, we never let the contestants' sob stories influence us."

"Krissa has the totality of traits that the judges were looking for," said de Leon.

Composer and fellow judge Louie Ocampo agreed: "Krissa won because she was the best. Personally, I don't think she put sort situation in Cagayan de Oro had anything to do with the results. People are smarter than that. If they wanted to help the flood victims, then I'm sure they'd rather donate goods than spend for a text vote."

'I rode on wave of mud,' says flood survivor

From page A1

who did not make it.

"I feel that I was saved only so that I can find them," a visibly distraught Estorco said of his wife, daughter and their children, Jhoen Russel, 11, and Jill Anne Rose, 7. He had not found them yet when he talked to the Inquirer yesterday.

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) put the death toll from the disaster and their children at more than 700 late last night, with about 900 others listed as missing. The Department of Health (DOH) officially listed 533 fatalities and 259 missing, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

Health officials in Manila and in Cagayan de Oro debated whether they should first help the National Bureau of Investigation identify the bodies before burying them.

"We do not recommend mass burials," said Dr. Eric Tayag, a DOH director in Manila. "The families should be able to mourn and bury their dead."

(1) MOURNS AGAIN?? Flood survivor Guillermo de Guia, 51, (left) covers his nose as he searches for his wife and three children outside a funeral parlor in Lapasan Baugen, Misamis Oriental province. MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

Dumped at landfill

But local officials concerned with health risks from rotting cadavers had begun preparing common graves.

At least 40 unidentified and missing bodies were dumped inside the city's sanitary landfill to avoid mass burial, said Senior Insp. Jessie Vinluan.

He said the bodies had been left lying along a corridor and the morgue of Indahon Funeral Homes, which announced it would no longer accommodate them.

In Barangay Pala-o, officials began digging up a 45-square-meter common grave in the village cemetery where 300 or so unidentified bodies were to be deposited.

Jessica Sudang Llorenca of the city mayor's office said the local government would ensure that the burial ground would be "dignified."

She said she understood the qualms of families who did not want their dead buried in a mass grave but the urgency of the situation demanded drastic measures.

"We don't want a health problem in our hands," Llorenca said.

She said it was not only the community's physical health they sought to protect but also its psychological state.

"When they smell the bodies in their villages, it will only serve to remind people of the tragedy. And even if it's no longer the dead that they smell, any rotten smell would evoke sad memories," Llorenca said.

Mass burial in Iligan

A similar move was being undertaken in Iligan City. "Today, we will dig a mass grave and bury the unclaimed bodies as well as those that are affected by state of decomposition," said Mayor Lawrence Cruz.

Up to 88 of about 200 bodies recovered in Iligan since Saturday's flash surge on Wednesday would be placed in a common grave, Cruz said in a TV interview.

The bodies awaiting burial were wrapped in white plastic bags buried lightly with rain-soaked packing tape.

The mayor said funeral homes were already inundated with unclaimed corpses and were now running away newly recovered dead.

But he told reporters here in the city that he had abandoned plans for a mass grave when told of Marcilyn's position on the issue ahead of a visit by President Benigno Aquino. He said individual tombs would be built instead.

The taxpayer-financed open Ukrain on a visit to a funeral parlor in neighboring Lapasinlingan town.

Six trips to four funeral parlors in Cagayan de Oro had been for weight, Ukrain said, recalling the personal discomfort of hauling her brother's body from the sea of mud, climbing bodies that piled up to torrential waters there.

As a result, city officials arranged for the corpses to be deposited at the sanitary landfill in Barangay Carmen—not to be burned (there has to be some with formaldehyde and embalmed.

A barangay official said relatives could not bear the smell of the corpses in various states of decomposition and worried that the flies they attracted might spread diseases.

Helpless

But not Orlando Medrano, who marched in stoic silence as his 15-year-old daughter Nina was entered for burial.

Medrano, a plain handler from Isla de Oro, said it was more that he had managed to save four of his female neighbors when he failed to look after his own child.

"I could do nothing. I had my 3-year-old daughter Xyra strapped to my chest, but I could not watch my other child there," he said.

In Upper Hinaplanon in Iligan, Ibrahim Abad, a 55-year-old public driver, found a solution.

Mourners before the walls of water reduced his house to rubble, he hastily tied together long-sleeved shirts, tightened them around his wife and four children and stitched them to his waist as a safeguard.

"We climbed the roof of the mosque where we held on," he said.

Search continues

Elsewhere, the desperate search for loved ones continued.

From Iligan City, Rogelio Amadis, a government mechanic, traveled to Cagayan de Oro in search of the family of his sister Rose Amado-Pelaez, 37, who, along with her family of four, had disappeared on Barong Island.

"Almost everything was wiped out on Barong. Only a few houses are still standing," Amadis said, shaking his head.

There was no death of relatives, but a piece of GMC license a pot that helped a family find the body of its owners to a house that became the haven of 30 people.

Isria-Ali Sahidulah, president of a homeowners association in Upper Hinaplanon, recalled how a dog inside discovered woodcarver's stump of human toes.

He said the family had been looking for an elderly man whom he could only identify by his surname "Lagrimas."

"The dog would not move away from that spot. It was shaking its head and whimpering, as I told them 'look in that area where the dog is,'" Sahidulah said.

They found the man on June 1.

At a subdivision in Barangay Santiago, a pink two-story house served as refuge to more than 30 people whose own homes had been swept away by the swollen Mandulog River.

This morning, Edmund Subito, 44, said he put hope opening the door to anyone who knocked until 30 people were huddled on the roof of his house.

"I didn't have the heart to turn anyone away. I knew like that we only have each other to turn to," he said. With reports from Philip C. Tubeza and Jaymee T. Gamil in Manila, and Jill D. Ucman, Ryan B. Rosauro, Apolloni T. Jonio and Bobby Lagsa, Inquirer Mindanao

Homeless survivors seek shelter, solace in church

From page A1

Fr. Nestor Zaragosa, the parish priest, said the evacuees ran to the church for shelter when Sendong hit the city over the weekend. Since Saturday, more and more people have come to the church.

Zaragosa said his parish would continue to attend to the needs of evacuees even if plans to consider them to a nearby school pushed through.

Past noon yesterday, when the Inquirer visited the church, most of the evacuees had not taken their lunch.

Zaragosa said the rations came late. The priest, in an effort to lighten the burden, cracked jokes with the evacuees.

More than 18,000 families or 80,000 individuals in 13 other evacuation centers were in the same situation.

CDO evacuees

In Cagayan de Oro City, officials said some 6,000 families or around 30,000 people were packed in the evacuation centers.

The City Central School gymnasium, where more than 30,000 people are staying, drinks as soldiers are without water and flower's little ventilation.

Flood victims claimed they did not receive any warning to evacuate before the storm struck.

Hundreds but were Isla de Isla-Isla in Barangay Macasandig, and Barangays 21 and 22 in Isla de Oro, a strip of land in the river accessible only by a hanging bridge.

Lenel Paulani, a resident of Barangay 22 said she and her family were at home the whole day listening to radio stations for updates on the storm.

"All we knew was that there was a storm coming and it would hit Friday night," she said.

Paulani said that several neighbors were encountering other radio stations, and that the only news they received was from the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

No official warning

She said no government official or telephone went around the village to warn residents, contrary to claims by Noel Pama, officer of the city's Council of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Rama said no less than former Mayor Vicente Jaculada went out to the streets to urge the people to evacuate.

Armin Cuenca, chief of the Oro Ambulance for Life Emergencies and Rescue Team, disputed Lenel's story, saying people of the approaching storm. He blamed residents for their wait-and-see attitude.

Bernie Bacalzo, also a resident of Isla de Oro, said they did not get any warning from the government.

"It's a lie, they were not seen anywhere before the flood came," Bacalzo said.

Other residents from Isla de Oro shared the same sentiment. No warning came from the government or from the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

Lenel Ellape was taken assisted the alarm in Iligan, prompting residents to flee while the water was still knee-deep. But residents said the flooding that struck at dawn on Saturday was beyond their imagination. Flood waters rose swiftly in minutes.

P-Noy finds self in eye of storm

From page A1

Malacañang struggling to cope with the aftermath of the storm's wrath.

The criticisms of the President came after Cabinet-in lambasted "Come w' work ... Yes for tracing ran ... (I it was nice to see Pres. P-Noy laughing at my jokes). The hilarity of reactions catapulted the term "PSE" to the list of trending topics on Twitter Philippines.

Consequences later dented her entry concerning Mr. Aquino's presence at the party. She also issued an apology to those offended by her tweets and defended the President against the criticisms.

Criticized, defended

The overall of criticisms extended one from star Mary Ponday who said: "Apparently, he was (and being heartless, callous and cruel."

Wayne van-owned an Ayala meeting, but can't cancel a PSE party to attend to CDO victims," said user Benigno, apparently referring to an occasion when Mr. Aquino missed one day of a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to extremely because of problems at home.

Others said it was understandable for Mr. Aquino to be at the party of his security aides.

User rockrich said there was nothing wrong going to the party because it was for people who need "bonding moments to relax as so" (ready to be for you).

No impropriety

Malacañang denied Mr. Aquino committed an impropriety.

Presidential Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang said the PSE had considered cancelling the party opening for the Malacañang tragedy but it was too late because family members had already arrived.

He said reports about the President's presence at the party were "exaggerated" and "taken out of context."

Both Carandang and Lacierda said Mr. Aquino had in fact cancelled last night's Christmas party for his Cabinet "in deference to the Mindanao flooding and Mindanao casualties."

Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr., head of the Presidential Communications and Operations Office, said: "Yes, it's true the President was there but let us place it on the proper context. It was a celebration for the PSE, by members whose role is to protect the life of the President 365 days a year ...It was to give them a bit of morale and welfare."

Speaking at the Kapihan sa Dinalupihan Hotel forum, Coloma said: "It was a simple Christmas celebration of soldiers. It was not the President who was celebrating. It was just his experience of solidarity and thanks."

Coloma appealed to the public for understanding. "It was maybe just two hours or an hour of his time. He only listened to two or three songs performed by (Kelvin Concepcion). Maybe we can give the President a break," he said.

Mr. Aquino is due to visit storm-ravaged areas in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and Dumaguete today. With a report from Jaymee T. Gamil and AFP

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Azkals battle Malaysia in tough friendly

By Cedelf P. Tupas

THE PHILIPPINE Azkals face another stern test early next year when they battle reigning Suzuki Cup champions Malaysia in a FIFA-sanctioned friendly at the Rizal Memorential Stadium.

With the match falling on an international friendly date on Feb. 29, the Azkals hope to have a full complement of players for the showdown against the Malaysians, who have won every major title in Southeast Asian since 2009.

Clubs are inclined to release players for national team duty during international friendly dates, which means the Azkals could have Europe-based standouts Stephan Schrock, Neil Etheridge, Dennis Cagara, Jerry Lucena, Ray Jonsson and goalkeepers Neil Etheridge and Roland Muller for the match.

"It will be another good test for our team," said Philippine Football Federation president Mariano "Nonong" Araneta yesterday. "As we have said in the past, playing more international matches will only improve our team."

The match against Malaysia will form the final phase of the preparation of the Azkals for the 2012 AFC Challenge Cup in Kathmandu, Nepal, where they have been grouped with North Korea, Tajikistan and India. The Malaysians are ranked four places higher than the Azkals in the FIFA rankings at No. 155. The friendly will mark Malaysia's first return to the Rizal Memorial since 1991 when it lost in an upset to the Philippines, 3-1, in the SEA Games.

SAD to be still smarting from the defeat in Kuwait in the World Cup second-round qualifiers (above), the Azkals are hoping that a fine performance against Suzuki Cup champion Malaysia will restore morale.

Corteza gets past Orcollo, rules rich Pacman tilt

LEE Van Corteza sustained his mastery of Dennis Orcollo Sunday night, scoring a convincing 11-7 victory over the World No. 1 to rule the $50,000 Manny Pacquiao International 10-Ball Championship at the Star Billiards Center in Quezon City.

Coming and going after a loss in the earlier rounds, Corteza posted a stunning reprise of his win against Orcollo in another rich local tournament to capture the $20,000 champion's purse.

Orcollo settled for the runner-up check of $10,000 in the one-set shootout staged by Sunday sportscaster Pinoy Pacquiao, an avid billiards enthusiast.

On his way to the finals, Corteza overcame Roberto Gomez, 9-6, and then eliminated Jeffrey Ignacio, 9-6, in the semifinals.

Orcollo pummeled unheralded Jeffrey Diaz, 13-7, in the quarterfinals after handling Jose Jandel Pineda, 9-7, in the last eight. Diaz was responsible for sending Corteza to the losers' bracket early in the tournament.

The cash-rich tournament lured the likes of former World 9-ball Champion Thorsten Hohmann of Germany, Jericho Bautista and contested pool champion Carlo Biado.

Steve Elkins, Carol Hunter

CORTEZA: $20,000 in the pocket

Alcala siblings Singapore Youth champs

FILIPINO ace Makrinne Ann Alcala ever aimed to learn her stuck in the international circuit in the weekend the girls' Under-17 singles title to the Li Ning Singapore Youth International Series in Singapore Sunday.

Showing poise beyond her years, the 16-year-old Alcala survived a gritty match from Indonesian Fharrasia Setyana Putrella, 22-20, 21-17, to secure her second straight title.

Alcala's younger brother, Markki, also made his presence felt by giving the country a second title in the tournament.

Markki commoded Malaysia's Ong Ren Hau, 21-11, 21-17, in the boys' Under-15 singles event to underscore his southern Asian ace in the sport.

Markki's win capped a remarkable year for the Allied Vitron teamster, who also ruled four events in the Philippine Badminton Ranking Tourney recently.

Makrinne also had a banner year, winning two Open titles in the PBATA circuit, aside from sailing three titles in the Ming Kwan Cup Victor Philippine Open.

She topped the singles, doubles (with Fhirma Cruz) and mixed doubles (with Rossel Gotauliclut at Club MM and at the PSC Badminton Hall not weeks ago.

On the heels of the Alcalas' triumphs, the Philippine Badminton Association is already lining up a series of local and international tournaments in 2012.

The Philippines was well-represented in the Singapore tournament with MBE Bulacan, Pilbachers Badminton Academy, Junior Lions Training Camp, Ilocanes Training Camp, Allied-Victor Pilcorp, CDO Badminton Team and Team Pinatar also fielding players.

The Philippine contingent was headed by Vice President Jojo Binay and Gen. Rodrigo Lacate Jr.

The most hotel players from Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Singapore, Japan, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Australia, Scandinavia and Vietnam.

MELVINNE Ann (left) and Markie Alcala land two titles for the PH contingent.

MANCHESTER United's Wayne Rooney passes the ball in the match against Queens Park Rangers at Loftus Road Stadium in London.

ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP

Quick-firing Rooney pushes Man U on top

LONDON—Wayne Rooney took just 52 seconds to find the net as champion Manchester United knocked Manchester City off the top of the Premier League, for a first home at home, with a 2-0 win at Queens Park Rangers Sunday.

The England striker grabbed his 12th league goal of the season with a strong header off a cross from Antonio Valencia on a bright but bitterly cold afternoon at the stadium groomed to the top flight.

Michael Carrick made it 2-0 in the 56th minute with a fine run from midfield to score his first post-Premier League goal for owners.

United has 38 points from 16 matches, a point and a game more than City which is hosting Bolton placed Arsenal in a later kickoff with the score 0-0 at halftime.

Tottenham Hotspur were third on 34 points after beating Sunderland 3-0 at White Hart Lane thanks to a 64th minute goal from Roman Pavlyuchenko.

Chelsea, which drew 1-1 at relegation-threatened Wigan Athletic on Saturday, fell to fourth on 32. Liverpool climbed to sixth place, ahead of Newcastle United, after winning 2-0 at Aston Villa.

Craig Bellamy scored the first in the 13th and Martin Skrtel made it 2-0 four minutes later.

Liverpool's top scorer Luis Suarez rules for the scoresheet in the second half, including a lovely chip over goalkeeper Brad Guzan.

Rooney's goal was the third fastest of the season so far and United could have made it 2-0 after just three minutes against predicted opponents which has been in back in the first division in 1992.

"I thought it was a good performance but I thought we were unsettled at a lot of the chances we had," said Ferguson, whose side was knocked out of the Champions League 16 days ago. Reuters

Manny has Floyd Jr. on the ropes?

BABE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MANNY Pacquiao willingly yielded the spotlight to Brian Viloria and humbly soaked him for his role conquest of a gallant Montrose foe, before crediting the sparkling victory to what he called "Pinoy power."

This was on Dec. 11, a sweet Sunday at the Waters Sports Arena in Pasig City where the 31-year-old Viloria scored what were clearly his greatest wins in the thrill of a boxing-crazed patron.

He chops thereafter, Pacquiao pronounced his 33rd birthday celebration, reportedly his biggest and most lavish, with a resonant all-expenses-that could really start Viloria's trade heroic feat.

* * *

Boxing writer Nick Giongco reported yesterday that Pacquiao has offered to take a cut from his purse if this would lead to Floyd Mayweather Jr. finally coming forward to fight him.

Giongco said Pacquiao views there should be no problem if he gets fans the important thing is for the super fight to become a reality—"Walang problemang kahit na mas malit ang premyo ko. Importante sa amin ay ang laban" (I have no problem with a smaller prize purse. What's important is for the fight to push through).

Giongco said this could only mean that Pacquiao is moving heaven and earth to relish the hope of the fight with Mayweather Jr. finally pushing through.

* * *

It was a stance that tied the super boxing world in a reel.

There was no word from the Mayweather camp as we went to press.

But from a neutral point, Giongco's humble offer sort of puts Mayweather on the ropes.

Of course, slippery as he is, Mayweather could come up with a counter, although to consultants would be the common response.

* * *

Says the famous Michael Buffer of Examiner.com: "Wisely and showing maturity beyond his age, Pacquiao outfoxed not his smaller ego to find of the undefeated fighter who refers to himself as Money."

Similarly impressed was Igor Frank of Glendale Boxing Examiner: "Carrying a whole country on his shoulders, Pacquiao has always said that all he wants to do is make his people happy; his people want the Mayweather super fight next year."

A third commentator disagreed.

"Desperate times call for desperate measures," noted Ben Thompson of FightHype.com. "According to multiple sources, Grafts of the matter is that Pacquiao is currently in a serious financial crisis, the reason he's willing to do and say whatever it takes in order to make the most amount of money as quickly as possible."

* * *

More than his coveted fistfights, Pacquiao displayed the honesty, honor and courage of a well-loved Filipino hero.

Floyd Jr., in case he's still unaware, happens to also represent the heart and honor of a conquered house from the land of the free and home of the brave.

The ball, indeed, is now in Mayweather's court.

One wrong move and he dishonors a great fighting tradition of the noble American soldier.

PRESIDENT'S CUP Ka Lin Campos (second from left) receives her prize, a round-trip ticket to the US, from China Airlines representatives Redmond Lee (third from left) as Wack Wack president Philip Ella (extreme left) and WW sports and games committee chair Eddie Gokongwei look on during awards rites of the recent Wack Wack President's Cup.

Renowned Russian IM holds Checkmate clinics

A SPECIAL series of the Checkmate clinics sponsored by Nike will be conducted during the holidays by Russian International Master Nikolay Andrianov at Uno Extension Corinthian Building on Ortigas Avenue corner Edsa.

Andrianov, a regular Manila visitor and one of the world's best chess trainers, has had training sessions with some of the country's finest players including Grandmaster Wesley So, GM John Paul Gomez, GM Julio Catalino Sadorra and Woman IM Arianne Caoili.

The first series—nine sessions scheduled on Dec. 21 to 23 and the succeeding on Dec. 28 to 30. For inquiries, call the Metropolitan Chess Club at 8356061, 8356013/8356014 or 09229029018.

RACING POST
BY TOP CHOICE
At San Lazaro LP

Juvic also Players' Player of the Year

BANGKOK—Filipino fairway maker Juvic Pagunsan claimed two prestigious titles whose he was named the Players' Player of the Year at the Asian Tour Awards Gala to go with the prestigious Order of Merit crown held in the lit. Bright Hotel on Sunday night.

The 33-year-old Pagunsan will enter the Asian Tour golf annals as the first Filipino to reach the summit of the just concluded 2011 season which came to an exciting close at the inaugural Thailand Golf Championship.

Pagunsan's the way to the largest to a magical November where he finished second in the lucrative Barclays Singapore Open, which earned him $666,666. He also registered three other top-10s in the HSBC Hong Kong Open Classic, Mercedes Benz Masters and UBS Hong Kong Open to end the year with $788,298 (P34.28 million).

The unassuming Filipino also earned the respect of his peers by picking up the Players' Player of the Year title, which is determined through voting, after a consistent season which saw him miss only two cuts.

"It is an honor to be voted as the Players' Player of the Year," said Pagunsan. "It shows that my fellow competitors also believe in my abilities. I am proud of this achievement."

Korean superstar KJ Choi was honored with the Asian Tour's Special Achievement Award for winning the Players Championship, expanded as the world's unofficial fifth Major, on the PGA Tour in May and also for his career finishes in the game and society.

Tjun Yan Der Pink of South Africa was named Rookie of the Year after a fine season where he produced five top-10s, including a runner-up finish at the HSBC Hong Kong Classic. He had $187,033 in winnings.

Korea's Noh Seung-yul, the 2010 Order of Merit champion, topped the Driving Average category with a driving average of 312 yards while Rich Beem of Canada was the straightest driver of the ball throughout the season with an 81 percent fairway hit rate.

That star Thongchai Jaidee took home the sought-after Lorena Ochoa Average category with 69.84.

Asian Tour Move

JUVIC Pagunsan, his Order of Merit trophy perched on his left, also bags the Players' Player of the Year prize after clinching among his peers.

Chiefs end Packers' NFL winning run

KANSAS CITY, Missouri—The lowest flop Packers' perfect NFL season came to a crashing halt on Sunday against the beleaguered Kansas City Chiefs, who rallied behind interim coach Romeo Crennel and new quarterback Kyle Orton to a shocking 19-14 victory.

Orton finished 23 of 31 for 299 yards in his first start for the Chiefs (5-8), who fired coach Todd Haley last Monday after the team had lost five of its last six games.

But behind an inspired performance by the defense, four field goals by Ryan Succop and Jackie Battle's sheer touchdown was enough to hold off the Packers (13-1) their first loss since Dec. 19, 2010, at New England. The Packers had won 19 straight games in the past year, including the Super Bowl.

Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers was just 17 of 35 for 233 yards and a touchdown, and he also scampered eight yards for another touchdown with 2:12 left in the game. But the Packers were unable to recover the onside kick, and the Chiefs picked up a couple of first downs to secure the win.

Colts 27, Titans 12

In Indianapolis, Dan Orlovsky threw a touchdown pass and the key block on an 84-yard TD run to lead the Colts to their first win of the season.

Indianapolis (1-13) avoided becoming the second team in NFL history to go 0-16.

Quarterback Matt Hasselbeck started ahead of twice and Chris Johnson rushed for only 33 yards for Tennessee (7-7).

Orlovsky gave the Colts a 10-6 lead with an 18-yard TD pass to Reggie Wayne in the third quarter, and Jacob Lacey made it 17-6 with a 32-yard interception return for a TD. AP

SAFE HOUSE: Beer import Richard Jalur (right) drives past Air Asia Philippines counterpart Anthony Johnson.

Beermen halt jittery Patriots

Top Bangkok ABL preseason tilt

SERVING their readiness for the tougher grind ahead, the San Miguel Beermen overcame the Air Asia Philippines Patriots, 84-75, Sunday night to make that To Be Standee Cup Basketball Challenge in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Beermen notched control with a 7-0 spurt and never let up against Thailand Army early in the third period and sustained their drive to complete a three-game sweep of this tournament that serves as a warmup for the third season of the inaugural Basketball League next month.

San Miguel had earlier downed the Indonesia Warriors, 75-69, and Singapore Slingers, 79-68, in the group phase.

The Patriots, champions of the inaugural season of the ABL, also came into the game with two wins after toppling the Singers first and Thailand.

But the Beermen showed they will be a force to be reckoned with in the coming season, running through with several quick spurts that paved the way for a 41-23 halftime edge.

Import coach Glenn Capacio said the Beermen showed in win.

"They (Beermen) are prepared, while we are still far from being called a team," Capacio said in Filipino.

The former Far Eastern U mentor vowed to pull out all the stops to make the Patriots a contender when the season opens Jan. 14.

"What's important is that we were able to see how the other teams play and how we can also improve as a team," Capacio said.

The coming season has been constituted as the toughest yet by Patriots manager Erich Arejola, citing the presence of the Beermen.

Cordell D'Rupan

The scores:

San Miguel Beermen (84)—Johnson 17, Quinto 15, Ilascaro 10, Jose 10, Tiongson 8, Fernandez 8, delos Reyes 5, Espinosa 2, Lastimosa 0.

Air Asia Philippines Patriots (75)—Antonio 20, Miller 19, Manuel-at 9, Jacobs 7, Sangalang 6, Nunez 5, Arellano 5, Fernandez 2, Cuevas 2, Cunningham 0.

Quarters: 27-12, 41-23, 57-48, 84-75

SEAG medalists to get cash incentives tomorrow

By Jane Manaors

THE FILIPINO varsitians in the recent Southeast Asian Games in Indonesia will receive their cash incentives tomorrow as a surprise ceremony at the Jacinto Hall of the Philippine Sports Commission.

The Philippine Sports Commission will hand out the 190 million cash incentives to the athletes and P4.1 million to the coaches from funds released by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Triple Jumper Frederick Ong earned a windfall as the most successful Filipino athlete in the biennial games with five medals—a gold in men's singles, three others in the men's team, doubles and mixtures and a bronze in the men's duo.

Ong could even surpass the earnings of lady rue swim Jen Rancia, the lady fighter double gold medalist, who raked the 5-ball and 9-ball singles in billiards.

Under Republic Act 9064, also known as the Incentives Act, a gold in the SEA Games is worth P500,000, a silver P50,000 and a bronze P25,000. Coaches are entitled to an amount equivalent to 30 percent of their athletes' bonuses.

The Philippines finished sixth overall among 11 countries with 26 gold, 36 silver and 77 bronze medals.

The PSC has a standing policy that athletes should declare the name of their coach prior to any competition. PSC chair Akiko Garcia said some of the athletes have failed to follow the procedure.

"We have a gold medalist and yet there are four or three who are claiming to be his coach," said Garcia. "This delayed the release of the incentives."

Olivarez trips PMMS, sweeps NCRAA elims

OLIVAREZ College teamed on John Corbett in the end game and romped with a 69-64 decision of Philippine Merchant Marine School in the 10th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament yesterday.

Corbett's triple with 10.7 seconds left clinched the win for the Olivarez Sea Lions, who completed a six-game sweep of the elimination round, at their home court in Bacoor, Cavite.

Corbett's two, which came from a jump shot, also sealed a 64-all deadlock and eventually rewarded the Sea Lions with the No. 1 seeding in the quarterfinal round of the tournament supported by Mikasa and Molten Balls, and Accupuncture, Inc.

"This is the first time that the team swept the elimination round after 10 years," said Sea Lions coach Michael Angeles.

"They were inspired by Sir (Mike) Olivarez cheering us on," added Angeles.

The Mariners, with Jun Bercenese firing a game-high 17 points, rallied from 18 points down in the third, but fell short.

PMMS netted for the No. 2 seed with its 3-1 win-loss record.

In the other match, Rizal Technological University drew big baskets from Elias Santos and Jayjet Quiro to roll back Pasig College of Accountancy, 63-51.

Franklin Mascio chilled an 18 points for the Sea Lions, Lancelaus had nine and Corneth added eight.

Santos and Quiro scored in the last 21 seconds as the RTU Blue Thunder earned their third win in five matches.

Andy Cenal paced RTU with 12 points.

ALL IN THE FRAME: The Globe rugby squad in a post-Cebu game portrait by shot.

Immortals rule Globe PRFU 7s

THE GLOBE Telecom Rugby team, coached by Philippine Volcanoes member Andrew Wolff, topped the recent Globe-PRFU 7's League Finals Division held at the Nonoak Sports Center in Parañaque.

Made up of half-time Globe employees led by team-captain Jay Coward, the Globe Immortals posted a thrilling 7-5 win over Team Pinoys in the finals.

The Globe Immortals was formed in August as part of the company's roster of sports teams. The program aims to allow employees to pursue interests in the field of sports.

Members of the Globe Immortals said they earned to their deep passion for rugby to upstage the opposition.

'Thorpe-edo' misfires in comeback

SYDNEY—Five-time Olympic champion Ian Thorpe said it's still too "premature" to judge the success of his swimming comeback, despite his disappointing results in recent competitions.

Thorpe finished 16th in the 100-meter freestyle and 10th in his first 200m freestyle race in almost four years at the Indian Pacific Championships over the weekend, his first long-course meet of the season.

He was still several seconds off the times he will need to qualify for the Australian team at the national Olympic trials in March.

"I'm in training at the moment, I came here to take the opportunity to race, and to race against the best swimmers we've got around," said Thorpe, the Australian newspaper on Monday. "I don't look at where I come in the race.

"I look at the time, how fast it is. I watch it, I critique my race after it but I have an essential what the others are doing. It's not a concern now, maybe later, but now it's no pressure."

The 29-year-old Thorpe came out of more than five years of retirement earlier this year in a bid to earn for Australia at next year's London Olympics. As well as Olympic gold, the man nicknamed "Thorpe-edo" won 11 world titles and six 13 individual world records.

Thorpe said things are coming back every time he goes to the pool.

"It's responsive than I was, whether it's a good result or a bad result, I have to keep racing or else stage," he said.

Thorpe said he felt more comfortable racing in the 200m first, in daily he finished in a time of 1 minute, 51.51 seconds, which was 7 seconds off his best time in the event.

THORPE

Cayanan top Coseteng tanker

By Cordell P. Tupas

PAUL Cayanan collected three gold medals while posting a quadruple A standard time to emerge as the most outstanding tanker in the NSAC Gaming Swim Championships at the Rizal Memorial pool over the weekend.

The 22-year-old marathon threw the Jury Archers Swim Team ruled the 13-14 girls' 100-meter backstroke as well as the 200-m and 50-m freestyle.

Highlighting Cayanan's remarkable feat is the 17th leg of the Philippine Swim League (PSL) win her quadruple A standard time of 28.39 seconds in the 100m free. Cayanan also bagged a silver in the 200m individual medley.

"She (Cayanan) has a lot of potential," said PSL president Susan Papa.

Shining the limelight with Cayanan was 16-year-old Kristi Chavez who ruled two events.

Chavez, a student at the Ultimate Preparatory School, stroked 2:07.47 to edge superior rivals in the 200-m free and 1:01.10 in the 100-m fly.

Two-year-old Gunner Cassidy Pineda rookie standout Cayanan's three-gold haul with victories in the girls' 13-under 50m butterfly, 50m freestyle and 50m backstroke in the event held to mark the fastest season's birthday.

PAULA Cayanan of Jury Archers Seagull Swim Team churns his way to the golden win 200 women freestyle in Sunday's NSAC Gaming

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Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

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DOE: No leaks so far in FPIC pipeline

Tests show pressure to be stable; experts to give recommendations to SC

By Amy R. Remo

NO LEAKS have been found so far on the 117-kilometer-long Batangas-to-Manila white oil pipeline owned by the Lopez-led First Philippine Industrial Corp. (FPIC) following the conduct of pressure tests last week.

Energy Undersecretary Jose M. Layug Jr. said engineers yesterday that during a 48-hour-long monitoring period with the start of the pressure-controlled leak test last Wednesday, pressure in the pipeline was found to be stable.

"[In] real-time inspection of monitoring wells located in various places along the pipeline, we have not seen any leaks," he said.

According to him, the Department of Energy (DOE) will continue to monitor the pipeline until noon today and thereafter, it will submit its recommendations to the Supreme Court (SC).

Layug explained that they wanted to monitor the pipeline for three days to ensure that the results would be more "reliable."

The leak test is aimed at determining the structural integrity of the pipeline as ordered by the high tribunal and recommended by the energy department's pipeline integrity report.

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Ramgen GF wants to enter witness protection program

By Marlon Ramos

THE GIRLFRIEND of slain actor Ramgen Bautista yesterday sought protection from the Department of Justice (DOJ) after her estranged mother-in-law threatened to kill her.

Accompanied by her lawyers, Jennifer Manahan went to the DOJ to personally submit to Justice Secretary Leila de Lima her application for her inclusion in the government's Witness Protection Program (WPP).

"I think the response [of the DOJ] will be positive," Manahan told reporters before she was whisked away by her lawyers.

"I'm okay. I'm recovering well," she said in response to questions about her health.

Wearing sunglasses, Manahan spoke softly, apparently still having the effects of the injury she sustained after she was shot in the face.

She was with Bautista at his family's house in GF Homes, Parañaque City when a lone gunman barged into his room and shot them on the night of Oct. 26.

Manahan survived the attack, but her boyfriend died after he was shot and suffered several times.

Anger Guevarra, one of Manahan's lawyers, declined to provide details of her application to enter the WPP although he stressed the need for the government to provide her protection from possible attempts on her life.

He said his client had also asked Dr. Lima to immediately form a search for stolen P40,000 against Bautista's sister, Gail Bautista-Pamparanes, and her husband Finn Parsapanes.

According to Guevarra, Manahan feared that the Parsapanes might try to leave the country to avoid prosecution after she implicated them in the attack on her and her boyfriend.

Aside from the Parsapanes, witnesses have also linked Bautista's other sibling, Ma. Ramona and Ramon Joseph, to his death.

Ramon Joseph was arrested a few days after the killing while Ms. Ramona left the country and has yet to return.

Family of five, pregnant teen killed in hour-long Pasig fire

By Mike Cabuja

A FAMILY of five and a pregnant teenager were killed after they were trapped in a burning house in Pasig City just after midnight yesterday.

The bodies of three of the victims — a 16-year-old girl known only as Jessica; Joseph Felipe, 28; and his wife Annie, 27; — were burnt beyond recognition.

On the other hand, the father's three children identified as Joanne Mae, 6; Lira Jane, 3; and Brian, a baby; sustained just minor burns because their parents shielded them from the flames.

Firefighters came to the conclusion after they found the couple's bodies on top of that of their children, according to Senior Insp. Anthony Arroyo, chief arson investigator of the Pasig City Bureau of Fire and Protection.

Arroyo said the fire started at 12:54 a.m. on Calbang Street in Barangay Pinagbuhatan in Jessica's room on the ground floor of a three-story wooden house. The Felipes were living on the third floor.

The blaze then spread to 13 other houses and left 42 families homeless before it was put out at 2:44 a.m.

Arroyo said the fire could have been caused by a lighted candle.

"The neighbors said that the electricity in the house had been cut off because of unpaid bills," he added.

The damage to property was estimated at P1 million. The displaced families have temporarily been evacuated to the barangay's covered court.

TRAFFIC STOPPERS
Drivers of passenger jeepneys and buses stage a sit-in in front of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board office in East Avenue, Quezon City, to protest the sanctions meted out against them by the agency for their participation in a transport strike earlier this year. MANNY MORALDE

Antipolo joins no styrofoam, plastic drive

By Mike Cabuja

ANTIPOLO'S 1,000 establishments, including malls and big grocery stores, in Antipolo City are now complying with a city ordinance banning the use of Styrofoam containers and regulating the distribution of plastic bags.

Jocelyn Maranguha, officer in charge of the city environment and waste management office (CENRAO), said it took the city government two years for City Ordinance No. 2009-378 to be approved in 2009 since there was a two-year extension before its full scale implementation.

"We carried out several information campaigns before the actual implementation. This is the reason why the implementation of the ordinance met no resistance from the business sector," Maranguha said in a phone interview.

According to her, 91 percent of the 1,201 establishments which the CENRO team monitored between November 18 to December 14 complied with the ordinance.

Among those establishments were big malls and stores like SM City Masinag, Ultra Mega, Shopwise, Budget Lane, Nailine, Bookstore, Mercury Drug and convenience and drugstores.

She said the local environment office has also been checking whether the city's recycling public markets were following the ordinance.

"What we see compliance, this means stores selling dry goods must not distribute or use plastic bags and Styrofoam. Dry goods establishments can only use plastic bags as the primary packaging material of wet goods," Maranguha said.

Maranguha's team will monitor the establishment's compliance every day, Violators face a P500 fine for the first offense.

"We are still hoping that the 100 other establishments who were given violation tickets will soon comply with the city ordinance," she said.

UP special body to probe fireworks mishap

By Julie M. Aurelio

OFFICIALS of the University of the Philippines have formed a special body to investigate the November mishap that injured 17 bystanders at the annual Lantern Parade last week.

The Quezon City Police District's firecrack probe station also invited for questioning two employees of Aziza Harvest Company, reportedly the contractor of the fireworks display.

The Lantern Parade is an annual UP tradition that began in 1953, marking the end of classes and the start of the Christmas break for students.

This year, despite meticulous safety measures, it was nonetheless the first but not the second of the spectacular fireworks display spectacular marred and marked by the fatals of several spectators," the university said in an apology.

[M SORRY] to learn about Director Magnaguid Gadiola of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) going on leave because of an ongoing probe into the kidnapping of a Japanese woman by some of his men.

Gadiola had a spotless record when he was with the Philippine National Police (PNP), and I'm sure he tried to keep his reputation intact when he joined the bureau.

But then the NBI has a culture much different from where he came from. Into a nonmilitary organization that is the PNP, where discipline is strictly enforced, to an institution that is the NBI, where discipline is toppled but not stood for by members who create they are supposed to be responsible people as they are lawyers, entitled public accountants and others who hold master's and doctorate degrees.

What Gadiola, a lawyer, didn't know was that there are rank-and-file members of the bureau, like security guards who secure bureau premises and facilities, who think and act like NBI line agents (lawyers and accountants).

There's a Filipino saying that a fly perched on the back of a carabao thinks it's already a carabao.

That exactly describes the members of the NBI security management division (SMD) who arrested without a warrant and detained Sanjiv Dhara, 33, at the NBI headquarters for more than a month.

Under the plan, SMD members are not authorized to make arrests as they are not line agents.

Secondly, they didn't have any amateur order from Gadiola when they arrested Dhara, prosecution-related sites, to Rogelio Pangantiwan, previous on Oct. 29.

Arresting an undocumented alien is not the job of the NBI but of the Bureau of Immigration.

Worse, SMD members led by Major Gerardo Gil-Ong and his deputy, Jose Cabdiza, demanded a P15-million ransom from Dhara's home family for his release.

A certain Divine Espina, who hung around at the SMD office, confirmed from Dhara a ransom remaining very expensive watches, jewelry, in Apple laptop, documents pertaining to her boss in Parañaque City, a 2013 model BMW car and two Honda cars.

Espina, reportedly Gamal's or Cabdiza's girlfriend, should be made to return all the things she took from Dhara.

This is probably the worst crime that NBI members have committed in its 76-year history.

As I said in my Saturday column, I'm surprised why newspapers and radio and TV news networks didn't give too much attention to Dhara's kidnapping for ransom by members of the country's premier law enforcement agency.

ON TARGET
Raymund Fajilo

Dhara has been moved from the immigration detention center inside Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City , to an undisclosed location for her safety.

The Japanese woman, who left her country to escape the wrath of the Yakuza that had killed her father, was turned over by the NBI to the immigration bureau on orders from Justice Secretary Leila de Lima.

I had earlier asked De Lima to intervene in Dhara's behalf after representations I made with the NBI for her release fell on deaf ears.

I learned about Dhara's kidnapping after members of her foster family, De Marcans of Bagalihan, complained to me on my public service program, "Straight no bay Talks," on RadyoInquirer-dzIQ.

The members of the Marcans family—Aderlin "Nonoy" Marcans Viaduez and Johnny Perez—have been placed under the Witness Protection Program of the Department of Justice because of threats in their lives.

DOE: No leaks so far in FPIC pipeline

technical consultant in the area of pipeline operations and engineering.

The DOE is supervising the leak test with SGS experts from New Zealand Kinetel Services as an independent observer, and representatives from the University of the Philippines-National Institute of Geological Sciences, the UP Institute of Civil Engineering, FPIC and Petar Power residents.

The pipeline was shut down in October last year after it was found out to be the source of the oil that had been leaking into the basement of Petal Tower Condominium in Barangay Bangkal, Makati City since July.

The discovery prompted the city government to order the evacuation of all residents in the 22-story building and the declaration of the surrounding area as a "danger zone" due to the possibility of an explosion.

The leak was later traced to five nine point-sized holes in a portion of the pipeline located just meters away from the condominium.

In November 2010, the high court issued a "writ of kalikasan" that ordered FPIC to clean up the areas affected by the oil spill.

The 117-kilometer long pipeline transports more than 50 percent of the petroleum products used by the Philippines, considered the largest depot in the country.

FPIC is facing a P2-billion suit filed by Petar Power residents for violation of the Philippine Clean Water Act, Philippine Clean Air Act and Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act.

8-year-old boy with bone disease needs financial aid

By Santiago R. Alcantara

ALTHOUGH 8 years old, Jhon Jhaven Lagunas has never been to school.

As a result of a hard fall at the age of four, he was diagnosed with Langerhans' cells histiocytosis. The bone disease has affected his skeletal system, causing pain and the swelling of his skull.

For now, his health is the first priority, the mother said, while he is undergoing chemotherapy. I fear for his life if he goes under the knife," she told the Inquirer in Filipino.

Judith and Jhon have been staying at a children's shelter in Project 8, Quezon City, while he is seeking treatment at Philippine General Hospital.

"More than the best of P5,000 for the 6 rounds and P3,000 for the 22 scans, I hope your readers will support our laboratory fees every three months or until he gets better," the mother added.

Judith can be reached at 0907-5197249. Donations can be deposited in the Philtrust account of her husband, Melchor Lagunas (account number 811093000946).

LAGUNAS

METROBRIEFS

Police couple file charges against attackers

SIX DAYS days after their release from the hospital, the police couple who figured in a shoot-out with motorcycle-riding men in Manila finally filed criminal charges against their attackers, the police said on Monday.

Police Senior Inspector Jeremy Pascua and Police Officer 3 Jeffrey Cadiz filed the cases because they are two wife, SPO1 Julio Indigol charges of frustrated homicide against the three alleged members of the notorious robbery group Ayo Gangsters opened fire on their car on Dec. 3 in Sta. Cruz, Manila. The Judas, both assigned to the Northern Police District, were on their way home when a motorcycle bearing three men abruptly stopped in front of them at the corner of Pampanga and M. Natividad Streets. According to a police report, the three men suddenly pulled out firearms—an Uzi submachine gun and a pistol—and fired at him. He managed to return to his car to get his handgun while Judas took out his service firearm. The armed men evaded the couple's volleys. Investigators, however, found the two "suspicious looking" men with a bloodied hand-a detail that the police report did not mention—and "Who filed the charges] so that these people can be put behind bars. They might harm other people again," Jeremie told the reporters. He said that the complaint was filed last week with the Manila City Prosecutor's Office.

Aisa Mercado Manglungsod

Cops catch 2 suspected robbers in Manila

AS TWO SUSPECTS yesterday said that they stranded two suspected robbers in Sampaloc, Manila, on Sunday night. PO1 Paul Bermudez of Station 4 of the Manila Police District said that they picked up Ronald Magallanes, 31, alias Ronald, at Machu and Michael Zaragoza, 33, alias Boom as Mike, both natives of Quezon province, on Vicente Cruz Street at around 10:15 p.m. He said that the area patrolling the street with another police officer when they spotted the two "suspicious looking" men with a bloodied hand outside a store. Bermudez said the two men fled in a motorcycle when they noticed the police officers. "We tried to chase them. When we finally caught up with them, they could not produce documents for the motorcycle," Bermudez said. Recovered from the two men were a fake gun, three knives, two bonnets and six cellphones. He said that they were checking whether the two men had stolen the motorcycle after they admitted that they had just robbed an Indian national in Concepcion Uno. Bermudez said that as with the Caloocan City police trio there are no updates yet," Bermudez said, adding that the two underwent inquest proceedings yesterday morning.

Aaron Recuenco

Secret US-Taliban talks reach turning point

WASHINGTON—After 18 months of secret dialogue with Afghanistan's Taliban insurgents, senior US officials say the talks have reached a critical juncture and they will soon know whether a breakthrough is possible, leading to peace talks whose ultimate goal is to end the Afghan war.

As part of the accelerating, high-stakes diplomacy, Reuters has learned, the United States is considering the transfer of an unspecified number of Taliban prisoners from the Guantanamo Bay military prison into Afghan government custody.

It has asked representatives of the Taliban to match that confidence-building measure with some of their own. Those could include a denunciation of international terrorism and a public willingness to enter formal political talks with the government installed by Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

The officials acknowledged that the Afghanistan diplomacy, which has reached a delicate stage in recent weeks, remains a long shot. Among the complications: US troops are drawing down and will be mostly gone by the end of 2014, potentially reducing the incentive for the Taliban to negotiate.

Still, the senior officials, all of whom insisted on anonymity to share new details of the months-secret effort, suggested it has been a much larger piece of President Barack Obama's Afghanistan policy than is publicly known.

US officials have held about half a dozen meetings with their insurgent contacts, mostly in Germany and Doha with representatives of Mullah Omar, leader of the Taliban's Quetta Shura, the officials said.

The stakes in the diplomatic effort could not be higher.

Failure would likely condemn Afghanistan to a continued conflict, perhaps even civil war, after most US troops finish turning security over to Karzai's weak government by the end of 2014.

Success would mean a political end to the war and the possibility that parts of the Taliban movement could become more likely to reject the talks—could be reconciled.

The effort is now at a pivot point.

"We imagine that we're on the edge of passing into the next phase. What it is actually depends on how well we execute," a US official said.

While some US Taliban contacts have been previously reported, the extent of the underlying diplomacy and the possible prisoner transfer have not been made public until now.

There are slightly fewer than 30 Afghan citizens at Guantanamo, according to various accountings. It is not known which ones might be transferred, nor what assurances the White House has that the Karzai government would keep them in custody.

Unconfirmed detainee have been released to foreign governments—and sometimes set free by them—before. But the transfer as part of a diplomatic negotiation appears unprecedented.

The reconciliation effort, which has already faced setbacks including a supposed Taliban envoy who turned out to be an imposter, faces hurdles on multiple fronts, the US officials acknowledged.

PAKISTANI Taliban fighters training in Lakka, South Waziristan tribal region, in image taken from a video, shot between Dec.9 and Dec. 14. AFP/SITE

They include splits within the Taliban; suspicion from Karzai and his advisers, and Pakistan's insistence on playing a major, even dominating, role in Afghanistan's future.

Obama will likely face criticism, including from Republican presidential candidates, for dealing with an insurgency government has killed US soldiers and advocates a strict Islamic form of government.

But US officials say that the Afghan war, like others before it, will ultimately end in a negotiated settlement.

"The challenges are enormous," a second senior US official acknowledged. "But if you're where we are ... you can't not try. You have to find out what's out there."

If the effort advances, one of the new steps would be more public, unequivocal US support for reconciliation by Taliban officials outside of Afghanistan.

US officials said they have told the Taliban they must not use their office for fundraising, propaganda or constructing a shadow government, but only as facilitators. Future negotiations that would culminate in the steps for the Taliban to reenter Afghan governance.

Reuters

Australia urges regional effort after 200 feared dead in boat tragedy

SYDNEY—Australian police were clashed in Monday to help Indonesia investigate people-smugglers as Canberra urged a regional solution to the deadly scourge amid its "collision disrupted by human life".

Home Affairs Minister Jason Clare said police would be deployed to assist the request after more than 200 asylum-seekers were feared dead in a weekend boat wreck off Java.

"In addition to sending our military assets to help this morning, the Indonesian have also asked for our assistance with policing," Clare told ABC radio, predicting ongoing efforts many officers would be sent.

"I think it is a consequence of the fact that this is a regional problem and it requires a regional solution.

"You've got people-smugglers that act with a callous disregard for human life."

"The only way to tackle this effectively (is) if you've got police forces in Australia and in Indonesia, police forces across the region working very closely together."

Canberra has already sent a navy patrol ship and a surveillance aircraft to help the search-and-rescue operation after the boat bound for Australia sank on Thursday off western Java in heavy seas and high waves.

The fiberglass vessel, which was carrying passengers mostly from Afghanistan or Iran, had a capacity of 100 but was holding about 200 people.

Reports in Australia, citing survivors, said the captain and crew put on life jackets and abandoned passengers when it started sinking.

Only 53 survivors have been plucked from the shark-infested waters on a well-worn route from Java to Australia's remote Christmas Island. AFP

Egypt Army, activists vie for public support

CAIRO—Egypt's ruling military and the revolutionaries who demand they immediately step down battled for a third day in the streets on Monday—and suspected directly for the support of a broad public that has grown tired of turmoil since the fall of Hosni Mubarak 10 months ago.

The generals appear to be winning the fight for the public, despite a heavy-handed crackdown on protesters around Cairo's Tahrir Square during a roughness that rivals even that of Mubarak's widely hated police force.

The protesters have tried to drum up Egyptians' anger at the military by spreading videos and photos of military police mercilessly beating young men and women to the ground with sticks and even batons—and the resonant scene of a woman in a conservative headscarf being stripped half naked by soldiers who stomp on her chest.

But so far their efforts to whip public sympathy don't seem to be gaining traction in the face of the military's campaign to depict the network of hundreds in the streets as hooligans and vandals, not the idealistic activists who succeeded in bringing down Mubarak. At least 10 protesters have been killed and 441 others wounded in the three days of violence, according to the Health Ministry.

"The military has failed in everything except for its stunning success in making people hate the revolutionaries," history and its revolutionaries," prominent columnist Ibrahim Eissa wrote in an editorial in the independent pro-revolution newspaper, Al-Tahrir.

Led by a general who served for 20 years in Mubarak's defense ministry, the military has been masterfully working to discredit the revolutionaries, accusing them of illegally receiving foreign funds and being part of a plot hatched abroad to destabilize Egypt. The generals have in the meantime sought to portray themselves as key players in the 18-day revolt that toppled Mubarak's 29-year rule and hence have earned the right to rule.

A YOUNG Egypt protester breaks down into tearful pieces that could be thrown at riot police. REUTERS

In a statement posted on its Facebook page, the military authority on Sunday called the clashes part of a "conspiracy against Egypt. It said its forces had the right to defend the "property of the great people of Egypt."

Seeking to depict the protesters as hooligans—and apparently to counter the widely published images of protesters being beaten or dragged on the ground—it also pointed on the page footage of young men throwing rocks at a lonesome window of the parliament building and of at least one removing to set the place ablaze.

The generals' campaign plays on Egyptians' frustration with continued instability and economic woes since Mubarak's fall. Many are now more focused on the multistage parliamentary elections that began last month and continue through March. Islamist parties have in the overwhelming majority against the vote, with liberals and secular parties far behind.

That trend continued with the announcement Tuesday of results from the second of three rounds of voting, held last month. Out of around 180 seats up for grabs in the second round, the Muslim Brotherhood won 39 and another more conservative Islamic party, Al-Nour, won 23. Two liberal groups—the Wafd Party and the Egyptian Bloc—won nine and seven seats, respectively. The rest will be determined in a runoff vote to be held later this week. AP

SURVEILLANCE Video image sequence shows a man spraying a liquid at a woman (out of frame) on an elevator in the woman's apartment building, in

Man in NY says he set woman afire in elevator over debt

NEW YORK—As Deborah Gilkenie went up the elevator to her fifth-floor Brooklyn apartment, carrying groceries, a man was waiting. He had been out for neighbors he recognized, and that she rarely saw there.

Surveillance video from inside the small elevator shows that he looked something like an exterminator, with a canister sprayer, white gloves and a chest mask, which was pushed up on his head like a pair of sunglasses. The sprayer was full of flammable liquid.

When the elevator opened on Saturday afternoon, the man sprayed the 73-year-old woman, who turned around and crouched down to try to protect herself, New York Police Department spokesperson Paul Browne said. The attacker sprayed Gilkenie in the face and continued to spray her "sort of methodically" over her head and parts of her body as her bags of groceries dropped—all her

items, Browne said.

Then, Browne said, the attacker pulled out a barbecue-style lighter and used it to ignite a rag in a bottle. He noticed a few seconds as Gilkenie backed out of the elevator and tossed the flaming bottle in.

Neighbors in the 9-apiece flights building quickly reported a fire, but had no idea that a woman was being burned alive.

Gilkenie, a 73-year-old woman stinking of gasoline went into a police station and implicated himself in Gilkepin's death, Browne said. The suspect, Jerome Isaac, told police he set her on the landing the sweet him $2,000 for some work he had done for her, Browne said.

Jaime Delgado, who lives on the same floor as Gilkepin, saw surveillance pictures of the attacker and said, "Oh, my God!"

Isaac, of Brooklyn, was arrested Sunday on murder and arson charges. AP

Zardari returns amid coup talks

KARACHI—President Asif Ali Zardari, who was in Dubai for medical treatment, returned on Monday as Pakistan's army chief, also in rising between his civilian government and the military over a memo accusing the country's generals of plotting a coup.

It's not clear when the deeply unpopular leader who has uneasy ties with the army will return to work.

The president is chronically ill and healthy and that is why he has returned," Shazia Marri, information minister for Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital, told Reuters.

"However, his activities over the next few days will depend on what the doctors advise."

Zardari could be damaged by the memo, reportedly crafted by the former Pakistani ambassador to the United States, which warns ally Pakistan might seek its own help amid the war down to neighboring Afghanistan.

Businessman Mansoor Ijaz, writing in a column in the Financial Times on Oct. 10, said a senior Pakistani diplomat had asked that a memo be delivered to the Pentagon with a plea for US help to stave off a military coup in the days after the bin Laden raid.

Ijaz later identified the diplomat as Husain Haqqani, the then Pakistani ambassador to Washington who is close to Zardari.

Haqqani denied involvement in the memo but resigned over the affair but has been dubbed "memogate."

The Supreme Court on Monday started hearings into a petition demanding an inquiry into who was behind it. As presidential candidate Mansoor Ijaz, writing in a column in the Financial Times on Oct. 18

The WORLD

Editor Lamberto B. Gococo

Havel, leader of Velvet Revolution, dies

VACLAV HAVEL, the writer and dissident whose eloquent dissections of Communist rule helped to destroy it in revolutions that brought down the Berlin Wall and swept Havel himself into power, died on Sunday. He was 75.

His assistant, Sabina Taterova, said Havel died at his country house in northern Bohemia.

A Czech embassy spokesperson in Bern, Michal Dvorak, said in a statement that Havel, a heavy smoker for decades who almost died during surgery for lung cancer in 1996, had been suffering from severe respiratory ailments since last spring.

A shy yet resilient, unfailingly polite boy dogged most who associated the powers of the powerless, Havel spent five years in and out of Communist prisons, lived for two decades under close-seven police surveillance and endured the suppression of his plays and essays. He served 14 years as president, wrote 19 plays, inspired a film and a rap song and became the star of his generation's most seductively unconventional writers.

All the while, he came to personify the soul of the Czech nation. His moral authority and his turning-ups of the Czech language cast him as the dominant figure among Prague street demonstrations in 1989 and as the chief helmsman the secret organizer who brought about the peaceful transfer of power known as the Velvet Revolution, a revolt so smooth that it took just weeks to complete, without a single bullet fired.

He was elected as post-com-

VACLAV Havel waves to thousands gathered on Prague's Wenceslas Square celebrating the communist capitulation and the nomination of the new government in photo taken on Dec. 10, 1989. AFP

munist Czechoslovakia's first president—a role he insisted was more duty than aspiration—and after the country split in January 1993, he became president of the Czech Republic. He linked the country firmly to the West, charting the way for the Czech Republic to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1999 and the European Union five years later.

Both as a dissident and as a celebrated leader, Havel impressed the West as one of the most important political thinkers in Central Europe. He enjoyed the status, perhaps by reform-minded Communist leaders like Mikhail S. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union and Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia, that Communist rule could be made more humane.

President Barack Obama said that he was deeply saddened by Havel's death. "His peaceful resistance shook the foundations of an empire, exposed the emptiness of a repressive ideology and proved that moral leadership is more powerful than any weapon," he said in a statement on Sunday.

It was as a dissident that Havel most closely championed the ideals of a civil society. He helped found Charter 77, the longest enduring human rights movement in the former Soviet bloc, and keenly articulated the lasting humiliations that Communism imposed on the individual.

During the Prague Spring of 1968, the brief period when reformers, led by Dubcek, believed that "Socialism with a human face" was possible, Havel argued that Communism could never be turned.

After the Soviets sent tanks to suppress the Prague reforms in August 1968, Havel persisted in the fight for political freedom. In August 1969 he organized a petition of 10 points that repudiated the politics of "normalization" with the Soviet Union. He was accused of subversion, and in 1970 was ribbed on state television and banned as a writer.

In 1977, Havel was one of three leading organizers of Charter 77, a group of 242 signers who called for the human rights guaranteed under the 1975 Helsinki accords. Havel was quickly arrested, tried and convicted of subversion and served three months in prison. He was arrested again in May 1979 and was sentenced to 4 1/2 years.

Havel's chance to power came in December 1989, eight days after the Berlin Wall fell, when the police broke up an officially sanctioned student demonstration, beating many demonstrators and arresting others.

Two days later, Havel convened a meeting in the Magic Lantern, a Prague theater, and he and other dissidents established the Civic Forum. It called for the resignation of the leading Communists, investigation of the police action and the release of all political prisoners.

The next day, an estimated 200,000 people took to the streets in Prague—the first of several demonstrations that ended Communist domination.

It was in the theater's envelope-filled room that Havel mapped the strategy and proclamations that finally undermined Communist rule. "It was astounding the degree to which everything ultimately revolved around this one man," wrote the historian Timothy Garton Ash, who was present.

Once installed in the Prague Castle, where the president's office is located, Havel gradually discarded crumpled jeans and sweaters for crisp shirts and sombre suits, although he often seemed more at home in the counterculture. On a trip abroad in 1995, he ignored mounting frustration and lingered on an airport tarmac for a chat with Mick Jagger.

"Initially he had difficulty changing his mentality from being a dissident to a politician," said Jiri Pehe, who read his chief political adviser from in 2007 to 1989. But Pehe argued Havel was a better president than many had expected.

"Because of his moral authority, he was able to stretch a weak presidency beyond what was written in the Constitution," Pehe said.

In June 1992, as Czechoslovakia began to break up, Havel resigned as president rather than preside over the split. He spoke then of the difficult metamorphosis from philosophers to politicians.

"Pushing into practice the ideals to which I have adhered all my life, which guided me to the dissident years, becomes much more difficult in practical politics," he said, before being later elected president of the new Czech Republic.

Klaus, a right-wing maverick who espouses the unvarnished capitalism Havel disliked, succeeded Havel as president in 2003. On Sunday, Klaus paid tribute to Havel, calling him "the symbol of the new era of the Czech state." **New York Times News Service**

WITH THE INTENTION OF PROMOTING AND PRESERVING THE SANCTITY OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF MANILA **AND HIS PRIESTS**, FOLLOWING THE LAST WISH OF THE LATE PATRICK GEORGE VALLENCE OF AUSTRALIA, SHALL CELEBRATE THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN THE FOLLOWING PARISHES FROM **DECEMBER 2011** TO **FEBRUARY 2012**. WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO ATTEND THE MASS AND PRAY THAT THE DIVORCE BILL WILL NEVER BE ENACTED INTO LAW IN THE PHILIPPINES.

PARISHES	ADDRESS
MANILA	
Archdiocesan Shrine of Nuestra Sra. De Gula	Ermita
Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Loreto	Bustillos, Sampaloc
Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Jude	J.P. Laurel St. St., San Miguel
Espiritu Santo Parish Church	Raxa Ave., Sta. Cruz
Holy Family Parish Church	San Andres Bukid, Sta. Ana
Immaculate Conception Parish Church	Tayuman, Tondo
Minor Basilica of San Lorenzo Ruiz	Binondo
Minor Basilica of San Sebastian	Plaza del Carmen, Quiapo
Minor Basilica of Black Nazarene	Plaza Miranda, Quiapo
Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception	Intramuros
Most Holy Trinity Parish Church	Balic-Balic, Sampaloc
National Shrine of St. Michael and the Archangels	San Miguel
Nuestra Sra. De Salvacion Parish Church	MDC Compound, Sta. Mesa
Nuestra Sra. De Soledad Parish Church	Cavitex
Nuestra Sra. Del Rosario Parish Church	Calamba St., Sampaloc
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church	Bacood, Sta. Mesa
Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Parish Church	Del Pan St., Tondo
Our Lady of Peñafrancia Parish Church	Gomez St., Paco
Our Lady of Remedies Parish Church	M. H. del Pilar St., Malate
Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish Church	Padre Gil St., Sta. Ana, Manila
Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Church	Leveriza St., Malate
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary (Chinese) Parish Church	Dagupin St., Binondo
Parokya ng Isa ng Laging Saklolo	Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila
Risen Christ Parish Church	Bakal, Tondo, Manila
Sacred Heart Parish Church	Old Sta. Mesa, Sampaloc
San Agustin Parish Church	Real St., Intramuros
San Fernando de Dilao Parish Church	Paz St., Paco
San Jose de Trozo Parish Church	Masangkay St., Sta. Cruz
San Jose Manggagawa Parish Church	Maruguit, Tondo
San Lazaro Chaplaincy	Tayuman, Tondo
San Pablo Apostol Parish Church	Magsaysay Vill., Tondo
San Rafael Parish Church	Bakal, Tondo
San Roque Parish Church	Blumentritt, Sta. Cruz
San Roque Parish Church	M. dela Fuente St., Sampaloc
San Vicente de Paul Parish Church	Marcelino St., Ermita, Manila
Santa Cruz Parish Church	Santa Cruz, Manila
Santa Monica Parish Church	Dagupan St., Tondo
Santisima Trinidad Parish Church	Estrada St., Malate
Santisimo Rosario Parish Church	UST, España
St. Anthony of Padua Parish	Singalong
St. Anthony of Padua Shrine	Mambulqui St., Sampaloc
St. John Bosco Parish Church	Bo. Magsaysay, Tondo
St. Joseph Parish Church	Gagalangin, Tondo
St. Maria Goretti Parish Church	Uli-Uli, Pyrio
St. Peter the Apostle Parish Church	Quirino Ave.
St. Pius X Parish Church	Dinia St., Paco
Sta. Niño Parish Church	L. Chacon St., Tondo
Sto. Niño Parish Church	Jesus St., Pandacan
MAKATI	
Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe	Guadalupe Nuevo
Holy Cross (Kambana ng Banal na Krus) Parish Church	J. P. Rizal St.
Holy Family Parish Church	Faraday St.
Mary, Mirror of Justice Parish Church	Comembo

PARISHES	ADDRESS
Mater Dolorosa Parish Church	East Rembo, Makati City
Nuestra Sra. de Gracia Parish Church	Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church	Bangkal St.
Our Lady of La Paz Parish Church	Archimedes cor. Rembo Sts.
Sacred Heart National Shrine	San Antonio Village
San Martonio Parish Church	Arnaiz Ave., cor. M. Reyes St.
Santa Teresita Parish Church	West Rembo, Makati City
Santuario de San Antonio Parish Church	Forbes Park, Makati City
St. Alphonsus de Ligouri Parish Church	Magallanes Village
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Church	Bel-Air
St. John Bosco Parish Church	Arnaiz Ave. cor. Amorsolo St.
St. John Mary Vianney Parish Church	Harris St., Cembo
St. John of the Cross Parish Church	Jasmin St., Pembo
St. Joseph the Worker Parish Church	Palanan St.
Sto. Niño de Pax Chapel	Greenbelt, Makati City
Sts. Peter and Paul Parish Church	P.P. Rosas
PASAY	
Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted Parish Church	Merkabas
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church	Don Carlos Village
Our Lady of Fatimas Parish Church	Harrison St., Pasay City
Our Lady of the Kinneys Parish Church	Chapel Road Cor. Aquino Ave.
Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish Church	Kalayaan Village
San Isidro Parish Church	Taft Ave. Extension, Pasay
San Juan de Dios Hospital Chapel	Roxas Blvd., Pasay City
San Juan Nepomuceno Parish Church	C. Jose St., Malibay
San Rafael Parish Church	Park Ave., Pasay
San Roque Parish Church	Cabrera St., Pasay
Shrine of Jesus the Way, Truth, Life	Reclamation Shrine
Sto. Dana de Montefalco Parish Church	P. Burgos St.
SAN JUAN	
Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Chapel	Cardinal Santos Medical Center, Wilson Street, San Juan
Mary the Queen Parish Church	Greenhills West, San Juan, MM
Santuario de Sto. Cristo Parish Church	Blumentritt St., San Juan, MM
St. John the Baptist Parish Church	Pinaglabanan, San Juan
MANDALUYONG	
Chapel of the Eucharistic Lord	SM Megamall
Divine Mercy Archdiocesan Shrine	Mayside Circle
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Church	Highway Hills, Mandaluyong
Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish Church	Halo, Wantalusyong
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Church	Wellbeville Compound
San Felipe Neri Parish Church	Boni St. Cor. Aglipay Sts.
San Roque Parish Church	Barangka
Santuario de San Jose Parish Church	East Greenhills, Mandaluyong
St. Dominic Savio Parish Church	Pag-asa St., Mandaluyong City
St. Francis of Assisi Parish Church	Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Mary Queen of Peace Shrine	EDSA cor. Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

11-month BOP surplus exceeds 2011 estimate

$10.29-B level boosted by portfolio investments, remittances

By Michelle V. Rama

THE SURPLUS in the balance of payments reached $10.29 billion in the 11 months to November, supported by inflows from portfolio and foreign direct investments, and remittances, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The BOP surplus so far this year has exceeded a revised $10 billion, or 4.6 percent of GDP, estimated by the central bank for 2011. The surplus was expected to narrow to $329 billion, or 1.1 percent of GDP, next year.

The 11-month surplus was, however, down 21 percent from $13.08 billion in the same period last year. The Philippines posted a record BOP surplus of $14.5 billion in 2010, boosted by strong portfolio inflows.

The BOP surplus also stands in November as the country settled more outstanding obligations, the BSP said.

(continued on Page B2)

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Dec. 19, 2011
43.990

STOCK MARKET
Dec. 19, 2011
13.18

(See stock market report on Page B7)

Stocks up on buying of blue chips

THE MAIN local stock index gained yesterday as investors bought selective blue chips, particularly PLDT and SM Investments, shrugging off the devastation caused by Tropical storm "Sendong," in Mindanao.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index added 13.18 points or 0.31 percent to close at 4,258.12.

"The Philippines is outperforming this region and is the only one with an index that is likely to end higher from last week," said Jose Mari Lanzon, head of research at local stock brokerage Campos Lanuza & Co.

"The most surprising development here is that PLDT has broken the P2,600 level—for the first time since November 2010. Investors appear to be looking positively at the merger between PLDT and Digitel with this vote of confidence and was ignoring the dilution risk once new shares are issued in payment for San Miguel," Lanzon said.

PLDT was up 1.02 percent at P2,554 while SM Investment shares gained 0.71 percent at P544.50 each.

Lanzon said investors seemed to be ignoring the potential effects of Tropical Storm Sendong.

"We feel sound. SM Prime and Ayala Land have mall expansions to Cagayan de Oro. Ayala building Centris in CDO while SMPH has an existing mall in CDO already," Lanzon said.

Sino largely to the gains dealt out by PLDT, the rainbow counter gained 1 percent, outperforming other sub-indices.

Value turnover for the day amounted to P5.1 billion, aided by about P500 million in net foreign buying.

But despite the overall index gain, there were only 82 advancers, which were outnumbered by 118 decliners while 60 stocks were unchanged.

Reiko C. Zenko

Negotiated sale for FTI property seen in 2012

By Roland W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT expects to finally privatize its Food Terminal Inc. property in Taguig City through a negotiated deal by 2012, according to Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima.

But Purisima said in an interview that the process could not push through until after a new appraisal of the 120-hectare chunk of land has been conducted.

"Land bank of the Philippines will do the reappraisal and as you know, a negotiated bid will automatically undergo a frame shall bring," he said.

This means that the government must entertain other proposals for the privatization, which the proponent of the negotiated bid has the option to match.

The finance chief explained that the FTI property was last appraised in 2010 and then the government wanted to make sure the valuation was up-to-date before pushing ahead with negotiations.

In 2009, the government deferred the privatization of the FTI land after public and competitive biddings failed for the third time.

Back then, the latest appraisal placed the value of the FTI asset at P13 billion, although finance officials said the government expected to earn less than that because of the repeated failure of bidding.

Ayala Land Inc., SM Mipad Properties Inc. and SM Investments previously expressed interest to acquire the property in Taguig City.

The government raised only P800 million—mainly from the sale of small ticket items—through its privatization efforts in

(BUSINESS B2)

Megaworld biggest residential condominium builder in 2010

More than 40 projects, BPO offices in pipeline

By Doris C. Dumlao

TYCOON Andrew Tan-led Megaworld Corp. is the country's biggest builder of residential condominium in terms of units completed in 2010 and those in the pipeline for the next five years, the property company said, citing research from property consultant Colliers International.

This represented the leading market share of 18 percent of the market, Megaworld told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Apart from building the most number of high-rise residential units in 2010, Megaworld was noted to have the largest number of units to be completed from 2011 to 2016 based on all projects launched as of the third quarter 2011.

In terms of total saleable area of these projects launched and to be completed in the same period, it represented 16 percent of the market with a total saleable area of about 3.15 million square metres, the disclosure said.

Megaworld senior vice-president Francis Canale attributed the company's "strong residential sales" to two main factors.

"First is the popularity of our live-work-play-learn communities in Metro Manila, namely Eastwood City, McKinley Hill, Newport City, Bonifacio Global City, Forbes Town Center and McKinley West. Second is our proven track record of delivering more than 100 buildings to our customers over the last two decades," Canale said.

The company increased its net income from January to September this year to a record P6.88 billion, up 96 percent year on year, which was attributed to strong residential real estate sales and business process outsourcing office rental income.

Megaworld is developing more than 40 residential projects and several BPO offices in Metro Manila, for the year 2011. Megaworld has launched eight new projects, namely One Eastwood Avenue, 100 Newport Boulevard, Dito Epicenter, Residences, Manhattan Heights Tower 2, Vermont Tower 1, Greenbelt Hamilton and Richmond Luxury Hotel in Metro Manila. Megaworld has also launched its first project in Cebu called 8 Newtown Boulevard.

INVITATION TO BID

The Manila Polo Club (MPC) is looking for an established and reputable F&B concessionaire that can provide high quality food and services to its members. The concessionaire is expected to serve Club lunches and introduce new dishes for options.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Club's F&B Department with tel. no. 8176801 loc. 242.

A complete set of the Terms of Reference (TOR) may be purchased from the address given below and upon payment of P 15,000 (refundable upon submission of bid).

The opening and evaluation of bids shall be done by the Bidding Committee, for recommendation to the F&B Committee, on the scheduled date, time and place set by MPC Management.

The Club reserves the right to fully examine the competence of any bidder at anytime before the awarding of the contract.

F&B DEPARTMENT
Manila Polo Club, Inc.
McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City
Tel. no. 8176801 up to 50

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

Procurement of Janitorial and Sanitation Services for the Supreme Court for Two (2) Years (April 2012-March 2014)

The Supreme Court intends to apply, through the revised Appropriations Act, on the year the expense will be incurred, the sum of Thirteen Million Seven Hundred Nine Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Four Pesos (Php13,709,164.00) exclusive of Value-Added Tax (12%), being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) as payments under the contract for the Procurement of Janitorial and Sanitation Services for the Supreme Court for Two (2) Years (April 2012-March 2014).

The Supreme Court Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services (SC-BAC-GS) now invites bids for the above-stated procurement. Bidders should have completed, within two (2) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, contracts similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly in Section II, Instructions to Bidders. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the SC-BAC-GS Secretariat, and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting December 20, 2011 9:00 a.m. in the form from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00). It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Supreme Court, provided that Bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

The SC-BAC-GS will hold the Pre-Bid Conference on January 3, 2012, Old Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Supreme Court Distributing, Taft Ave., Manila at 2:00 p.m., which shall be open only to all interested parties who have purchased the Bidding Documents.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before January 17, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form and amount stated in the Instructions to Bidders. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall immediately follow at the Old Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Supreme Court Distributing, Taft Ave., Manila in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.

The SC-BAC-GS reserves the right to (1) reject any and all bids at any time prior to the award of the contract, (2) waive any minor formal requirements in the bid documents, (3) accept such bids it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the Court, (4) declare failure of bidding, (5) not award the contract, and (6) make no award to any that is not in accordance with the provisions of this invitation, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders or bidders.

For further information, please refer to the Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services (SC-BAC-GS) Secretariat
Office of Assistant Court Administrator Thelma C. Bahia
4/F, Supreme Court Distributing, Taft Ave., Manila
Telefax No. 552-9539

THELMA C. BAHIA
Assistant Court Administrator and
Chairperson, SC-BAC-GS

IT firm's stocks down 7.78%

SOFTWARE provider South Edsolomon Inc. saw its share price fall 7.78 percent during its stock trading debut on the second board of the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

The aims to be "the premier open-systems enterprise solutions provider for infrastructure software products and services" within the next two to three years but during its first day of trading yesterday, its share price fell at the market focused more on blue chips with proven earnings record.

The company's share price dipped to P6.15 from its initial public offering price of P6.98 yesterday.

The company listed on the PSE's second board, which is directed to medium firms, including upscale companies with the potential for superior growth and with at least P450 million in market capitalization.

Bulk of 2011 growth is expected to come from the company's expansion in four Asian territories. Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and Philippines, PSE president Atty Ed Egan in a press briefing.

Based on yesterday's closing, the company had P220.687 million in market capitalization.

TSI raised P99 million from its IPO consisting of 22 million common shares, thus bringing 29.3 percent of its outstanding stock to public hands.

Manny Ocampo, director of Ahanna Capital and Investment Corp., which acted as the IPO underwriter, said the stock debut was priced at a price to earnings ratio about 14x, in line with the valuation for global peers. Doris C. Dumlao

11-month ...

From page B1

Documents from the central bank showed that during the month, the BOP surplus amounted to $264 million, down 91 percent from $3.9 billion in the same month last year.

According to BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo, "BOP payments made by the national government to foreign creditors forced the country to shell out much more foreign currencies that it did last year.

Despite the decline, Guinigundo said the surplus still reflected a comfortable external liquidity position of the country.

The BOP is the difference between the inflow and outflows of foreign currencies to and from the country. A surplus adds to the country's total reserve of foreign currencies or the gross international reserves (GIR).

Guinigundo said the surplus in the first 11 months helped the country's inflow foreign exchange reserves, which have reached an all-time high of $76 billion.

The latest GIR, which indicates a country's ability to engage in commercial transactions with the rest of the world, is enough to cover 11 months' worth of imports.

The central bank has kept its remittance growth forecast of 7 percent this year despite a slowing US economy and debt problems in Europe. Remittance growth is now slowing to 5 percent next year.

Net portfolio inflows in the 11 months to October reached $3.44 billion compared with last year's $3.5 billion. With a report from Reuters

Negotiated sale ...

From page B1

2011, which was less than half to P2 billion goal for that year.

Along with the PIT list, Malacañang also put on hold the privatization of two other big-ticket assets, including the government's share in the Mahanpusa natural gas project and the lease of a prime property in Tokyo.

Those three properties were expected to raise a total of P30 billion.

Forecasting with the Santa Claus rally

Will you know that the Santa Claus rally is said to also include the first two trading days of January of the following year?

This may come as a surprise and leave you wondering "why should the first two trading days of the following year be included?"

The Santa Claus rally has always been regarded as a seasonal anomaly, generally described as "a surge in the price of stocks that often occurs in the week between Christmas and New Year's Day."

As a matter event, the Santa Claus may have arose from the natural process of the market to window-dress stock prices at the end of a trading period is believed.

To some extent, the last two trading days of the following year sometimes fall within the week where the current year is ending. Thus, this would render the first two trading days of the following year part of the Santa Claus rally.

Together with the festive and merry mood of the Christmas season that have influenced people to become self-indulgent as they enjoy bigger disposable income, people also become increasingly lavish and profuse even in their spending decisions. This fueled stock prices to rise.

Some other factors have some role play. One is the impact of "economizing and tax measure" where to trade stocks did not only make sense but also are necessary before the end of the year.

Because of all these developments, the last two trading days of the following year has become a relevant and integral part of the Santa Claus rally. For those reasons, the rally has technically become a standard of measurement of the market's psychology and as an educational gauge of what the coming year may become.

In 2009, stock prices were on the rise between Christmas and the last two trading days of the following January. This became the market's actual picture for 2010 as the whole.

In 2010, the behavior of the market on the last week of December 2010 and first week of January 2011 was also strikingly similar to the picture of the Santa Claus rally that occurred. The market seemed to be following.

In the last week of December 2010, the market was already on the fall. This obviously **continued past the first week of January 2011** as it ultimately hit bottom at 3,795.56 on July 23.

The movement of the market also became **complicated. The cycle now which stock prices** traveled host such a movement, though, were by means negligible. Trading gains, and losses, were minimally significant. Trading margins in individual stocks strong to and the from a loss of eight percent to a high of about 40 percent.

As of the close of trading last Dec. 16, the **market settled at** 4,304.94 of the PSEi.

The market may just linger within striking distances of this index level until the end of the year and into the first few days of January.

It is true that several significant reasons still explain the market's movement as it did. There was the birth of social awareness in Africa and the Arabian peninsula, the debt crises in the euro zone, and the state of the US economy, which remained a source for concern among investors.

But beyond all these, the fact remains that the market's patterns of movements for the year 2009 and 2010 fell into place, as indicated by the Santa Claus rally of the preceding year.

Therefore, the likely picture of the market's Santa Claus rally this year, the market for 2012 may continue to move largely sideways within an average market range of 10 percent.

(*The writer is a licensed stock broker of Eagle Equities Inc.*. You may reach the *Market Rider* at marketrider@inquirer.com.ph or directly at www.chipstock.com.)

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(LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY)
East Avenue cor. NIA Road
Quezon City

LRA CIRCULAR NO.: 27 - 2011

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LRA VOLUNTARY TITLE STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM FOR THE CONVERSION OF MANUALLY-ISSUED TITLES INTO ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES OF TITLE UPON REQUEST OF THE REGISTERED OWNER OR OTHERS WITH INTEREST THEREOF.

WHEREAS, the Land Registration Authority ("LRA") is implementing the Land Titling Computerization Project ("LTCP" or the "Project"), which among others, seeks to maintain on-line information on titles that is current, complete and accurate; maintain the security and integrity of records by safeguarding them from tampering or destruction and deter substitution or insertion of questionable data; ensure the integrity of the land titling registration system by moving from a largely paper-based to a largely paperless system; protect land titles from loss due to fire, theft, natural disasters and the normal ravages of time; and implement more reliable and predictable land registration procedures;

WHEREAS, a Computerized System has been designed, developed, and implemented to ensure that LRA and its Registries of Deeds ("RD" or "RDs") are able to fulfill the objectives of the Project;

WHEREAS, to further ensure that the objectives of the Project are met, a Voluntary Title Standardization Program (the "Program") was approved by this Authority whereby manually-issued Certificates of Title shall be deactivated, and in lieu thereof, using the Computerized System, Electronic Certificates of Title ("eTitle") shall be issued by RDs;

WHEREAS, the Program offers the following benefits to the public, to wit: (i) it shall further ensure faster processing of transactions, as RD personnel do not need to retrieve the physical original copies of the certificates of title subject of transaction; (ii) it shall protect original copies of titles from loss by storing them in an electronic safe-deposit form, which are regularly backed-up so owners shall no longer go through the expensive and tedious process of reconstitution; and, (iii) it shall ensure clearer Certified True Copies as compared to Certified True Copies issued on scanned images of the manually-issued certificates of title;

WHEREFORE, premises considered, LRA shall allow the conversion of manually-issued certificates of title into certificates that are issued by the Computerized System, upon request of the registered owner or other client representing the registered owner, or his/her interest thereof, as follows:

Section 1. The Program shall be formally called "LRA Voluntary Title Standardization Program".

Section 2. The following documents shall be required for Voluntary Standardization:

a. A verified Petition for Voluntary Standardization of Certificate of Title, duly signed by the registered owner/co-owners or their duly authorized representative/s. The Petition may cover several Certificates of Title in the name of the registered owner/ co-owners within the same jurisdiction and shall specify the Certificate/s of Title subject of the Petition. A pro forma Verified Petition shall be provided in the official LRA website (i.e., www.lra.gov.ph);

b. Copy of a valid Government-issued Identification Card (i.e., Driver's License, GSIS, SSS, HDMF, Philhealth, Passport, Postal ID) of the presenter;

c. In case the registered owner is represented by an agent, be it a natural person or a juridical one, a duly notarized Special Power of Attorney ("SPA") specifically authorizing the representative to file the Verified Petition for and on behalf of the registered owner(s). If the SPA was executed outside of the Philippines, the document shall be attested to by the appropriate Consular Official. A pro forma SPA shall be provided in the official LRA website;

d. In case the registered owner is a juridical entity, a duly notarized Secretary's Certificate or Board Resolution appointing and authorizing a representative to file subject Petition with the Registry of Deeds; and

e. The Owner's Duplicate of the Certificate of Title, and all issued Co-owner's Duplicate of the Certificate of Title, as the case may be.

Section 3. The following rules shall apply:

a. The Program shall be in line with previously approved and published Implementing Guidelines issued in relation to the LTCP;

b. The Program shall be voluntary in nature;

c. The Program shall only be available to Certificates of Title that have undergone the data conversion process, and are already in the database;

d. The eTitle resulting from this Program shall, in all respect, contain exact information as that of the manually-issued Title, and in no case shall there be an amendment of any kind or any of the entries thereon;

e. The Owner's Duplicate of the Certificate of Title, and all issued Co-owner's Duplicate of the Certificate of Title, as the case may be, shall be surrendered to the Registry; and

f. Once the Certificate of Title has undergone this Program, it shall be deemed as deactivated, and all succeeding transactions shall be registered on the basis of the resulting eTitle.

Section 4. The Voluntary Standardization procedure shall be as follows:

a. The client shall submit to the Registry concerned the verified Petition together with the Owner's Duplicate Certificate of Title and all Co-owner's Duplicate Certificate of Title, as the case may be, and such other required documents enumerated in Section 2 hereof. All basic information from documents received supporting the transaction shall be entered into the Electronic Primary Entry Book for Registered Land ("EPEB-RL"). The date, hour and minute of reception of all such documents, in the order in which they were received, shall then be noted on the new documents). The transaction shall be automatically assigned an entry number as its control or reference number.

b. The corresponding fees shall be automatically computed by the system and the corresponding receipt generated upon payment thereof. In default of payment, the entry made in the EPEB-RL shall be rendered of no force and effect. The applicable fees, as considered and published, shall be as follows:

LRA Fees	
1. Entry Fee	P50.00 per entry
2. Registration Fee	P50.00 for the Verified Petition; P120.00 for the SPA; P120.00 for the Secretary's Certificate or Board Resolution
3. Issuance of Certificate of Title Fee	P60.00 per title issued; P30.00 per additional parcel of lot
4. Issuance of Additional Copy of Certificate of Title Fee	P60.00 for the first page; P30.00 for each subsequent page
5. Annotation Fee	P100.00 per annotation
6. Judicial Form Fee	P50.00 per title issued
17 Service Fees (subject to value-added tax)	
1. Service Fee for Registration of Deeds	P344.88 per deed/instrument processed for registration, including, but not limited to supporting documents that are indispensable to the registration of the main document
2. Service Fee for Issuance of Certificates of Title	P215.88 per title issued

c. All pertinent data on the manually-issued Title shall be encoded and the corresponding annotations shall be made using the format and templates provided in the Computerized System, except the annotations already existing in the manually-issued Title, which shall be copied en toto on the resulting eTitle.

d. The encoded electronic data, as well as, the pertinent documents shall then be examined by the Registration Examiner. If the documents received are complete, the findings of the Registration Examiner shall be transmitted to the approving authority.

e. If the Petition is approved, a new Owner's Duplicate Certificate of Title and/or Co-owner's Duplicate Certificate of Title (i.e., the eTitle) shall be printed with a unique system generated title number. The electronic original copy and the printed Owner's Duplicate Certificate of Title and/or Co-owner's Duplicate Certificate of Title shall bear an annotation that it was issued through the process of Voluntary Standardization, as follows:

i. For the manually-issued Title:

Entry No.:
Entry Date and Time:

Certificate of Title No.: <Subject Title Number> has been deactivated by virtue of LRA Circular No.: <Number of Circular> with subject: Voluntary Title Standardization Program, published on: <Circular Publication Date>, and shall no longer be used in transaction processing. Henceforth, transactions shall be processed on the basis of PHILARIS-generated <Original/Transfer/Condominium> Certificate of Title No.: <New Title Number>.

ii. For the eTitle:

Entry No.:
Entry Date and Time:

Certificate of Title No.: <New Title Number> is issued based on <Original/Transfer/Condominium> Certificate Title No.: <Subject Title Number>, pursuant to Serial No.: <Serial No.> (if applicable), by virtue of LRA Circular No.: <Number of Circular> with subject: Voluntary Title Standardization Program, published on: <Circular Publication Date>.

Further, the eTitle shall include the name of the Registrar who issued the manually-issued Title, and the name of the Registrar approving the request for standardization.

Thereafter, both the original and duplicate copies of the manually-issued Title shall be stamped on each and every page thereof the following: "CANCELLED pursuant to the Voluntary Title Standardization Program (LRA Circular No. ____)". All documents shall be stamped with the prescribed transaction and signed by the approving authority in the RD.

f. The owner's duplicate copy of the manually-issued Title and all documents submitted by the client shall be scanned, and the resulting images shall be stored in the database. After scanning, the documents shall be filed and kept in the vault for safekeeping.

g. The owner's duplicate copy of the resulting eTitle and the copy of all the documents shall then be delivered to the registered owner or his duly authorized representative, who shall sign the acknowledgement slip generated by the Computerized System.

h. If the transaction is denied, a notice of denial shall be issued to the client who may, without withdrawing the documents, donate the transaction or consults within five (5) days from notice of such denial in accordance with the pertinent provision of PD 1529. Otherwise, the denial shall be considered final.

Section 5. This Program shall be implemented as follows:

a. Pilot Implementation. - The Program shall initially be implemented in the following Registries of Deeds:

i. Cebu City;
ii. Davao City;
iii. Province of Cebu;
iv. Lapu Lapu City; and
v. Tubod City.

b. Full Implementation. – The Program shall be implemented on all other Registries of Deeds using the Computerized System for transaction processing 3 months after the Pilot Implementation, or as may be determined by the Authority.

c. In all cases, this implementation of this Program shall be subject to the issuance of the appropriate Administrative Orders, which shall specify in which Registries of Deeds the Program shall be implemented, and its commencement date.

This Circular shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in a newspaper of general circulation, and the filing of three (3) copies hereof with the University of the Philippines Law Center.

Approved:

EDUARDO G. DIKIT III
Administrator

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Regarding Finance
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepED

INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Education intends to apply the sum of **Philippine Peso Eighteen Million Six Hundred Six Thousand Five Hundred Forty Four and 00/100 (PhP18,606,544.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to eligible payors to pay for the **Supply, Delivery and Installation of Information and Training on the Use of Multimedia Classroom Package to Selected Public Elementary and Secondary Schools under the Rehabilitation of Classrooms and Technical Facilities to Typhoon-Affected Areas in Metro Manila funded by ARMM - (no Schools)**

Lot	Package Description	Quantity	ABC
1	Multimedia Classroom Package for Elementary Schools	(in Packages)	PhP 12,404,544.00
	Multimedia Classroom Package for Secondary Schools	(in Packages)	

Bidding shall be open to all interested bidders subject to the conditions for eligibility provided in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184.

Open competitive bidding will be conducted using the non-discretionary pass/fail criterion as specified in the 2009 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184. Information is also available at www.deped.gov.ph or www.gppb.gov.ph or call DepED Procurement Service at telefax numbers 636-0142 or 636-1663.

Activity	Date and Time	Venue
Issuance of Bidding Documents	From December 20, 2011, 8AM-5:00 p.m. (except January 9, 2012, 10:00 AM)	DepED Procurement Service, Mr. Melvin Bell, DepED Complex
Pre-Bid Conference	December 27, 2011, 10:00 AM	Batangan ng Karunungan room, Bldg. 5, DepED Complex
Submission and Opening of Bids	January 9, 2012, 10:00 AM	Melchor Hizon Hall, DepED Complex

The Bidding Documents may be purchased from the Procurement Service, Room 1413, 8th Floor, Mabini Building, DepED Complex Office, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City upon accomplishing a written application sheet and payment in cash or a manager's/cashier's check for the amount of **Philippine Pesos Five Thousand (PhP5,000.00)** only to the Head of Procurement Service. Purchasers shall purchase the Bidding Documents with an interest in submitting bids.

Prospective bidders are strongly encouraged to inform themselves on the contents of the Bidding Documents from the PHILGEPS website (www.philgeps.gov.ph) for them to be included in the Document Request List of the project. The Bidding Documents may be viewed also at the DepED website: www.deped.gov.ph.

DepED reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or waive any defect therein, or cancel the bidding process without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders.

(Sgd.) **ARMANDO C. BAGE**
BAC 1 Vice-Chairperson

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Leyte
Municipality of Mahaplag

INVITATION TO BID
For the Rehabilitation of Farm to Market Road

1. The Municipality of Mahaplag, Leyte intends to invite bids for the rehabilitation of the Farm to Market Road from Brgy. Balacay-Sur, Lao (1.5KM) Road, with a Maximum Cost of [illegible].
2. The Municipality of Mahaplag, now invites the bidders to submit their bids. Bid documents are available at the Municipality of Mahaplag as of December 16, 2011 to December 30, 2011. A pre-bid conference will be held on December 19, 2011 at 10:00 AM at the Municipal Conference Room.
3. Bid opening shall be on December 30, 2011, 10:00 AM at the Municipal Conference Room, Mahaplag, Leyte.
4. For further information, please refer to:

(Sgd.) **CHARLES C. MORO**
Chairman
BAC and Vice-Mayor Committee

SPRAY-CRETE

"PATENT NOTICE & WARNING"

THIS is to inform the public that a **"Method of Constructing Concrete Walls Without Forms and Through Concrete Spraying,"** popularly known and marketed in the construction industry as "Spray-crete Walling System," has been patented by our Client, Floor Finish - Floor Level, Inc. (FF-FL, Inc.) under Letters Patent No. 1-2004-000494 issued by the Intellectual Property Office.

Said Spray-crete Walling System has been patented since 05 November 2004 and is effective for twenty (20) years or until 05 November 2024.

It has come to the attention of FF-FL, Inc. through its sister company, SprayCrete Corporation, that certain unscrupulous entities and/or individuals are copying, reproducing, counterfeiting and/or imitating the Spray-crete walling system and/or its process or end-result which acts constitute Patent Infringement and Unfair Competition under the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines (R.A. 8293).

These unscrupulous entities and individuals are now the subject of investigations by the police authority and if warranted, will be criminally and civilly prosecuted and dealt with according to law.

The public are hereby encouraged to identify and report other violators, infringers and/or unauthorized users of the above patent to our Client, registrant and patent holder, **Floor Finish - Floor Level, Inc. at PIECO Building 2242 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City 1200 or through the hotline (632) 840-5343 and 840-5352.** Financial reward awaits informants after positive identification of the violator/ infringer. All information relayed is confidential.

FELICILDA & ASSOCIATES LAW FIRM
Unit 1902-A Philippine Stock Exchange Centre-East Tower,
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600 Philippines
Telephone: (632) 706-0005 Fax (632) 706-0002

(PDI-December 19 & 20, 2011)

OBITUARIES

"Even when I walk through a dark valley I feel no fears. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage."
Psalm 23:4

REV. FR. THOMAS JAMESON HODGINS, C.Ss.R.

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
Vice-Province of Manila

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on the 18th of December 2011 at the age of 85.

Lies in state at the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Baclaran, Parañaque City.
The Funeral Mass will be on December 22, 2011 Thursday at 9:30 AM.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE

"The Will of God is accomplished"

EGIDIO "GIGI" RODIS ANCAJAS

"A dear Husband, Loving Father and a Worthy Brother"

died in the grace of the Lord on December 14, 2011 at the age of 66

His loving wife ADIE; children and daughters-in-law RIN, DADA, RON & JEN, EIN and RYAN; grandchild SOPHIA YUHS ME; mother-in-law VIRGINIA (Mama Nicasio); sisters and brother Cell; Bros. & Lolos; in-laws, nephews & nieces, relatives, friends and brethren of Freemasonry request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Resurrection 2 & 3 Chapels of Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation services will be on Friday, December 23, 2011 at 12:00 noon after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

Bienvenido Intengan Rapatan

passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 14, 2011 at the age of 83.

He is survived by: Thelma, his homestead wife, and his children Miguel, Raphael, Gabriel and Ma. Teresita request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Child Infant Jesus, La Salle, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, December 20, 2011 at the La Loma Cemetery, Caloocan City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

CHARISSE ZEÑAROSA-DEL CASTILLO

who peacefully joined our Creator on December 11, 2011 at the age of 38

wish to express our profound appreciation and gratitude to all those who, in countless ways, combined with and contributed to in our time of grief.

"We thank you Father for the gift of CHARISSE in our life."

Our Beloved

AMELITA "Lita" S. JOAQUIN BANEZ

of Pulo, Valenzuela City

died in the Grace of our Lord on the earlier A. 2011 at the age of 77 in New Evans, U.S.A.

Her loving husband, Atty. Jesus B. Banez, Jr.; son Dr. Arnel, Atty. Julius, and Rigel Alvin; and daughter Ms. Jesus, daughters-in-law Ms. Mildee and Atty. Levi; sons-in-law, Patrick Raoul grandchildren JC, Jaden C and Ryan, brothers, Rolly and Willie; sister Cuby, Pang and Meng, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Banez residence, Malangit, Valenzuela City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 21, 2011 after the 12 p.m. mass in San Diego de Alcala Parish, Pulo, Valenzuela City.

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Reaching Classifieds

More Classifieds on pages...

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP	A20
MANILA POLO CLUB	B2
SUPREME COURT OF THE PHILS	B2

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4)

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (ID)

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BUSINESS

BSP: 'Hot money' inflow plunged 71% in Nov.

By Michelle V. Rivera

FOREIGN PORTFOLIO investments in the country dropped more in November as the lingering debt crisis in the euro zone continued to dampen risk appetite of fund owners.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), net inflow of foreign portfolio investments amounted to $490 million in November, plunging by nearly 71 percent from the $1.7 billion reported in the same month last year.

In the first 11 months of 2011, net inflow of foreign "hot money" reached $5.9 billion, down by nearly 6 percent from the $6.2 billion seen in the same period last year.

"The drop was due to investor concerns" on Europe, the BSP said in a statement.

The country's performance in November, as far as attracting foreign portfolio investments is concerned, wiped out the gains made earlier this year, when investors were pouring in money in the Philippines and other emerging markets.

Earlier this year, yield-seeking investors were pushing money in stocks and bonds from emerging markets, which became the investment vehicles of choice for portfolio fund owners.

However, analysts said, investors became risk averse due to the prolonged crisis in Europe core.

This outlook on the euro zone has affected even the sentiment toward emerging markets, most of which are dependent on the West for their own economic growth.

The euro zone is a major export market and is also a source of investments for many emerging economies. Also, euro zone plays host to many migrant workers from the Philippines and elsewhere, whose remittances help fuel consumption in their respective economies.

The strong hot money inflows earlier this year pushed the peso up to as high as the 42-to-a-dollar level. But the decline in inflows reported in recent months caused the local currency to again bow to the 43 level.

The crisis in the euro zone is expected to go on well through 2012. As a result, inflows of hot money may continue to slow down.

Europe debt crisis blamed for year-on-year decline

CEB brings back Dancing Crew on special flights this holiday season

The Philippines' largest national flag carrier, Cebu Pacific (PSE:CEB) lands Christmas down on select flights from December 14 to 21, 2011 with special performances by its world-renowned dancing cabin crew.

"We are very excited to welcome our passengers this holiday season and bring them on board Cebu Pacific to be part of our Christmas celebration," said CEB VP for Marketing and Distribution Candice Iyog.

CEB makes a surprise invitation for passengers on select domestic and international flights this December. One such surprise has never-seen-before show on board. This is our way of thanking guests for all their support this year and sharing the holiday fun culture in more parades," she added.

Passengers can check CEB's official YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/cebupacificair) for updates.

Iyog said that the Filipino Christmas food choices served on CEB's organic lounging offering will be major airport hubs this year. For example, all the way to its flight menu, CEB's onboard treats this December include Bibingka, a traditional Philippine favorite, and White Christmas Mocha.

CEB also earlier announced additional flights to cope with inward demand this December.

The includes additional daily flights from Manila to Hong Kong (December 21, 2011-January 3, 2012) and from Cebu to Calamba (December 21, 2011-January 3, 2012).

Between December 21, 2011 and January 4, 2012, CEB also added one daily flight each on Manila-Iloilo, Cebu-Davao, Cebu-Iloilo, Davao-Manila, Cebu-Manila, and Manila-Davao routes.

The airline's trademark low fares can similarly be found on CEB's flights from Manila to Tacloban, Dumaguete, Cotabato and Kalibo.

"We want to make sure to give the utmost care for security queues, and you-there baggage at clearance upon boarding to speed up the check-in process. Guests may also do web check-in and they can select on the day portion of their homes or offices up to 2 hours before the flight. This service is available through the Manage Bookings section on the CEB website, www.cebupacificair.com," said Iyog.

For bookings and inquiries, guests can go to www.cebupacificair.com, or call the reservation hotlines (02) 702-0888 or (032) 230-8888.

CEB currently operates 31 Airbus A319, 18 Airbus A320, and 8 ATR 72-500 aircraft. By the end of 2011, CEB will be operating a fleet of 57 aircraft with an average age of 3.5 years - one of the most modern aircraft fleets in the world. Between 2012 and 2013, Cebu Pacific will take on additional 20 Airbus A320 and 30 Airbus A321neo aircraft.

Cebu Pacific all set for flights to Xiamen

By Paolo G. Montecillo

BUDGET CARRIER Cebu Pacific has announced plans to launch flights to the booming city of Xiamen in southeast China.

In a statement, the Gokongwei-led carrier said it would start flights between Manila and Xiamen by March 23, 2012, marking its fourth destination in mainland China after Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai.

The flights to Xiamen, the Gokongwei family's hometown, will be a thrice weekly service, utilizing one of Cebu Pacific's brand-new Airbus A320 jets. This will be Cebu Pacific's 39th international flight.

"Cebu Pacific looks forward to expanding its network in China, especially with Xiamen and Fujian province being the well-known hometown of about 60 percent of Filipino-Chinese in the Philippines, including the Gokongwei family," Cebu Pacific vice-president for marketing and distribution Candice Iyog said.

"We hope Cebu Pacific's direct weekly flights to Xiamen will boost trade tremendously between China and the Philippines," she added.

Xiamen is a highly industrialized city in the Fujian province, on the South-eastern coast of mainland China.

Aside from cities in the mainland, Cebu Pacific's Greater China operations extend to daily flights from Manila to Taipei, up to 6 daily flights to Hong Kong from Manila, Clark and Cebu, and 11 weekly flights to Macau from Manila and Clark.

The company also announced that flights to Beijing would be increased to four times a week from the current three-weekly service starting January 7, 2012 to cope with growing demand.

"We flew 30 percent more passengers to mainland China in the 3rd quarter of 2011, compared to the same period last year. CEB will continue to grow its China market with its trademark low fares and destination offerings, such as the island paradise of Boracay, Cebu and Cebu," Iyog said.

Cebu Pacific is currently the largest airline in the Philippines based on passenger numbers. For 2011, the company expects to serve 12 million guests.

Power Situation Outlook
for Tuesday, 20 December 2011

	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
System Demand (MW)	7,855	1,716	1,383
System Peak (MW)	8,897	1,421	1,249
Time Reserve (MW)	1,401	294	54

LIFESTYLE Wellness

How much would you spend to be fit?

By Mitch Felipe Mendoza
Contributor

Questions you should ask and budgets you can follow

HOW MUCH money are you willing to spend to achieve the strong and lean body of your dreams? Here are some possible lines to help you start your journey after you see your health and fitness resolutions.

Know your goals and motivation.

- Would you like to lower your blood pressure, run your first 10-km race, build more muscle and join a circuit training class without giving up, or burn more calories while enjoying an hour of nonstop dance class?
- How much weight would you like to lose by next year? Studies show that the most conservative rate of weight loss is at least 10 percent of your starting weight in six months (in five percent in three months).
- How much do you earn per month, per year? How much savings do you have now? Estimate your total expenses for this year and for each of your basic needs or you would have an idea about your budget next year.
- Set a monthly budget for your major expenses like food, groceries, transportation, bills, rent, entertainment, self-care, clothes, travel, children's needs, and your health and fitness.

The budget will depend on your income, lifestyle, needs and target savings. If your monthly income is P20,000 and your monthly expenses total P15,000, you can still allot a budget for your fitness lifestyle by cutting back on unnecessary expenses, and engaging in affordable fitness programs that suit you.

The zero-P1,900 plan

Walk or jog outdoors 30-60 minutes on most days of the week, preferably a total of at least 150 minutes per week. Walk instead of taking a cab, and you can save P100 for a free fullmonty clearance ride.

Do body weight exercises at home or at your local park for 20-30 minutes at least twice a week to improve strength and functional fitness. If your company has a corporate fitness center or wellness program, use it.

Buy a fitness video or book with credible fitness experts or consult with a fitness expert on a monthly basis for your fitness program.

Just giving up your daily high-calorie coffee drinks or desserts can already help you save an average of at least P3,000 per month. You can even use this for a monthly membership fee for a reputable health club or a good pair of running shoes.

The P2,000-P3,900 plan

Join a health club so you can try all the latest group fitness classes that one already improves your overall fitness: bodybuilding/resistance training classes, dance and cardio-based classes (including indoor cycling), mind-body classes like yoga, Pilates or Bodoo classes. Join the personal training and nutrition sessions so you can have a monthly program guide.

If you plan to train for shorter long-distance road races, get a qualified fitness/running coach who can train you at least once a week, and give you a weekly fitness and training program you can do on your own the rest of the week. With this budget, you can already register in a once-a-month race of your desired distance.

Budget and create your own home gym if you choose to work out on your own. I recommend that you get one to two pairs of dumbbells (P1,000-P3,000), an exercise mat (P500-P1,000) and stability ball or cushion (P500) and a session with a fitness consultant (P700-P1,500) who can come to your house to design your program.

Limiting or eliminating "cheat foods" with extra calories, such as beer, chips, chocolates, processed foods and canned/bottled flavored drinks, can really help you save P1,000-P4,000 (plus the calories) per month. So plan your grocery list and choose only "real healthy food" like lean meat, skinless poultry, seafood, whole grain breads, rice, vegetables, fruits and eggs.

The P3,000-P5,900 plan

Sign up for unlimited monthly group sessions at a fitness studio of your choice offering yoga, dance, circuit workouts and kaiser-basic classes. These studios offer free trial sessions so finance-smart people just might be able to get both sessions or connect monthly. Just make sure you will really use the sessions, and you will allot time for your chosen schedule at least two to three times a week.

If you want personalized attention from a trainer, sign up for once- or twice-a-week personal training session (P500-P1,200 per session) on top of your monthly gym dues.

If you want to exercise at home, buy your basic fitness equipment set (P2,000-P4,000) and hire someone who can come to your house at least once or twice a week (average of P600/session). Trainers usually bring a comprehensive training device (P7,000-P10,000) that can be incorporated into your body weight workout.

Get back on dusting-cut recipes and learn to prepare and cook food at home. You can save P4,000-P6,000 per month just by limiting your dining out to once a week or twice a month.

The P10,000 and above plan

Buy your own cardio equipment (P18,000 and above) like an indoor bike, treadmill if you just want to work out at home, monthly health dues expense.

Avoid expensive expenses for quick-fix weight-loss strategies that can cost you P10,000 or more, only to regain all the weight that you will lose because of the unrealistic weight-loss results that cannot be sustained for long.

Always choose the natural and healthy way.

E-mail the author at mitch.felipe@gmail.com

GARFIELD

A. LIPPA

PUGAD BABOY

DICK TRACY

LOVE-MOTS

BABY BLUES

RIKO MACHINE

SEN

HUTTS

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

DUSTIN

TULDOK

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Passion is authority — lovers, parents, teachers and VIPs — are very impressed by anything that's passionately argued, as it indicates a romance with the subject or subject matter (or both).

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Sometimes someone wonderful walks right by. You are thrilled to realize later (there are no hard people from a distant background). The question is: Where is that person?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Everyone has a private quiet, fantastic world. You are thrilled to realize later (there are no hard people from a distant background). The question is: Where is that person?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Everyone has a private quiet, fantastic world. You are thrilled to realize later (there are no hard people from a distant background). The question is: Where is that person?

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Rules state you are subject to whatever demands you might agree to at work today. Don't volunteer for anything you're not sure about. Know that you can deliver. (You likely will be tempted to do this.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) This is a wonderfully grand day! Get out and about yourself. Spend events, parties, places where you can meet and socialize and, of course, romance will make your day. Travel will suggest.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You'll make outstanding at formal activities and events that require participation. Be cautious with romantic relationships. Someone you might be attracted to may not share your feelings. Don't waste your time on this person. Instead, spend time with friends who appreciate you. Do something fun.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You'll have outstanding at formal activities and events that require participation. Be cautious with romantic relationships. Someone you might be attracted to may not share your feelings. Don't waste your time on this person. Instead, spend time with friends who appreciate you. Do something fun.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be careful with financial deals today. Although this is a good day for romance, you might overlook your usual caution when dealing. (Be careful.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Your best moves and strongest today. Unexpected invitations promise good times and pleasure. Do not plan to be somewhere overnight.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You have plenty on your mind today. Be careful with your words. Don't be pressured into anything. Things at home are getting better, and better, almost to a welcome relief.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) A quiet day for most of celebrations. Busy interactions with many people and circumstances. This is a great day to meet new friends or partner with someone.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

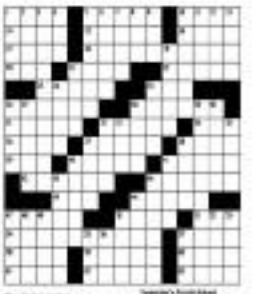
Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more puzzles and programs go to www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

	9			3			6	
2								9
	1		4		2		5	
		3		4		2		
7								5
		8		5		1		
	2		5		7		4	
8								1
	7			2			8	

Difficulty Level ●●

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



The halls are decked at InterCon

INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA is in full holiday mode. Philippine artist and floral architect Rudy Cuna has decked the lobby and its confines in a red and gold motif of poinsettias and angels and a towering Christmas tree of capiz shells. Christmas goodies and Prince Albert sweaters are on display at the lobby Christmas Mini Bazaar; reservations and tickets to the hotel's Buckingham New Year Countdown Dinner can be made and bought at the Christmas Mini Bazaar, and ornament gift certificates are now on sale, as well.

Christmas concerts will be held at the lobby on Dec. 20 and 21, from 7 to 7:30 p.m.

Christmas room packages for local residents are available for the period of Dec. 16 to Jan. 2 (except Dec. 31). Nightly rates start at P6,500 net for a Deluxe Room, P8,000 net for a Club Room and P9,000 for a Junior Suite with buffet breakfast for two and a P1,000 food and beverage voucher for a minimum stay of two nights.

For a minimum stay of two nights, holidayers (homecoming Filipinos) can stay in a Deluxe room at the special rate of P6,000++ per night, inclusive of buffet breakfast for two at Café Inspirasi plus efficient coupons for spa and salon services, Goldilocks discount voucher and cellular phone with 30M card for front use. Limited rate is valid until Dec. 31.

For Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, the Prime Minister will offer set lunch and dinner menus especially drawn up for the occasion by the culinary team, while Café Inspirasi will serve sumptuous buffets laden with international and local delicacies.

Holiday party packages with a choice of venues and Diverse Traditional Christmas, Filipino Christmas or Hawaiian buffet for a minimum of 200 persons are, likewise, available. Décor and mobile sound system are included in the package, along with other perks such as a wash up room and complimentary overnight stay for two.

InterContinental Manila now accepts food delivery to homes and offices in plenty, starting from 16 persons and in individual meal boxes customized to one's food preferences. Delivery is free in Makati City and The Fort for a minimum order. To order call 7617000 loc 6601.

The Intercontinental Festival party (a welcome 2012) will be held at the Grand Ballroom on Dec. 31. Jazz artist Cache and his band and the bongsta show band will provide music entertainment, while leggy showgirls will add spice and drama with their dance numbers.

For more information and reservations, call InterContinental Manila at tel. no. 7617000.

Acacia Hotel's Christmas treats

ACACIA HOTEL Manila celebrates the yuletide season with Christmas treats, special food and special room packages.

Alajandro Arboni chocolate from Dr. La Stelle Zobel, Southridge, Dr. La Stelle Candlelong and Director of Boutique Pastelist Arboni Association sing classic and modern holiday tunes at the Christmas Classic at The Lobby on Dec. 16 to 24, 7 to 7:45 p.m.

Carolina tradition in the member of Acacia Hotel Manila by unveiling all nine nights of Malabang Gabi at the Banana Activity Center on the third floor at 8 p.m. from Dec. 15 to 23. An array of Filipino delicacies will be served at lesser style in tipa buns for only P350 net per person.

Buffet lovers will enjoy a sumptuous spread of international and local holiday favorites at Friendly prices: P788 net for breakfast and P988 net for lunch and dinner. On Dec. 24, guests will be treated to a lavish dinner buffet for only P1,500 net per person.

Avail of the Christmas Room Packages from Dec. 16 to 30 and Jan. 1 to 15, and stay in a Deluxe Room for only P5,000 net or the most spacious Junior Suite for only P12,000 net. Rates are inclusive of buffet breakfast for two persons at Acacia, Wi-Fi access, tea and coffee making facilities, and free shuttle services around Filinvest Corporate City.

Acacia Hotel Manila is in Filinvest Corporate City Alabang, Muntinlupa.

For more inquiries and reservations, call 7282000 or 5003000. Like them on Facebook at Acacia Hotel Manila or follow them on Twitter @acacia_Hotels to get the latest updates.

BANANA Walnut Bread

Was there a real Jesus who lived on Earth?

THE HISTORICAL EXISTENCE of a god-man called Jesus the Christ has never been questioned by Filipino Christians. It is presumed that he truly existed as a real person around 2,000 years ago, was executed by the Romans, was buried, and on the third day he lived again. This is recited like a mantra by all Christians during Mass.

But a new surprise essay that the historical existence of Jesus has been debated by biblical scholars and historians from the earliest years of the Christian era.

The reason is the undeniable but little known fact that no contemporary historian during Jesus' time, like Tacitus, Josephus and Pliny the Younger, ever mentioned his actual existence, except in relation to the belief of the early Christians.

In other words, they were merely quoting what Christians themselves said about who their founder or leader was. There was never any independent source of his actual existence outside of the Christian Gospels.

Such an absence of references to Jesus as a historical figure is quite curious, considering the extraordinary miracles he was reported to have performed and demonstrated during his lifetime.

On the other hand, Buddha, who lived some 500 years before Christ and who never performed miracles as Christ did, had a more complete documentation of his life and historical reference from eyewitnesses.

I find this really strange, and it makes one wonder whether such a person as Jesus really existed and was not merely a myth created by the early Christians.

Because historians and critics have, from the very beginning, questioned Jesus' real existence as a person, the early apologists or defenders of the Christian faith made an impassioned and vigorous effort to prove that he actually existed and labeled those who didn't believe in him to be heretics and anti-Christian.

Their stance has never changed until modern times. They still call those who don't believe in his historical existence heretics and anti-Christian.

However, it cannot be denied that centuries before the advent of Jesus, there were already pagan beliefs in dying and resurrecting god-men, which parallels the story of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels adopted by the early Christians in 300 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Constantine, who officially converted Christianity by at least 600 years.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licanco

British authors Timothy Freke, a philosophy and religious scholar, and Peter Gandy, a classics scholar, did in-depth research into the earlier beliefs in dying and resurrecting god-men among the pagan religions and discovered, to their initial shock, that the story of Jesus was not unique at all but could even be said to be an adaptation of much older pagan stories.

Striking resemblance

In their 1999 book entitled "The Jesus Mysteries," Freke and Gandy reconstructed the story of the god Osiris-Dionysus from various pagan beliefs in a dying and resurrecting god-men. These stories, which were circulating way before Jesus supposed on Earth had a striking resemblance to his life, to wit:

1. Osiris-Dionysus is God made flesh and called the savior and the son of God.

2. His father is God and his mother is a mortal virgin.

3. He is born in a cave on Dec. 25 before three shepherds.

4. He offers his followers the chance to be born again through rites similar to baptism.

5. He dies at Easter time as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

6. After his death, he descends into hell, and on the third day he rises from the dead.

7. He ascends to heaven in glory.

8. His followers await his return as the judge during the last days.

9. His death and resurrection are celebrated by a ritual meal of bread and wine.

I may add here that a small gold coin dating back to pre-Christian Roman times bears the image of Osiris-Dionysus."

As expected, not everybody agreed with Freke and Gandy. Chris Forbes, an ancient historian and senior lecturer at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, has criticized their work and said that Freke and Gandy "are not real scholars, they are popularizers."

And that their arguments about issues are "general statements, and their attempts to draw links between Jesus and various pagan god-men is completely unskilled. When you break it down and look at it point by point, it really comes to pieces."

But calling Freke and Gandy "not real scholars" but "popularizers" does not prove or disprove anything. Labeling someone wrong, stating that the parallelism between Jesus and the pagan myths of the god-men are "completely unskilled" without showing how they are unskilled is a cheap break to logical thinking. In elementary logic, one call this the "ad hominem" fallacy. It does not destroy their arguments, but attacks their credibility. Yet, the debate continues.

NOTE:

For schedule of seminars, individual past life regressions, soundtrips and paranormal services, please call tel. no. 8187265/8151698 or mobile no. 09265196862. Listen to my radio program over DZMM every Sunday from 8-9 p.m. E-mail jaimelicanco@yahoo.com. Pay my website www.jimmyliknaco.com

Music meets urban fashion

URBAN ATHLETICS, the country's leading premium street lifestyle retailer in Greenhills 3, kicked off the second wave of Pulse Statedays Kings on Deck Welcome 2 Mixtape Launch! Urban Athletics flexed music and urban fashion as it unveiled two new brands that hit its store this month—Dada footwear and Philippine Street Plan (PSP) X Urban Athletics (UA) Collab Shirt.

Dada is the hottest urban basketball brand that produces footwear and alternative apparel for the hip-hop community. It originated from the PSP The collaboration gathered PSP's top creative artists Whoop, Nemo, Jend and Yeemean to design limited-edition shirts that fused together their signature elements.

Dada footwear and PSP X Urban Athletics Collab T-shirts are available exclusively at Urban Athletics, 2/F Greenhills 3.

Urban Athletics is a member of the Quezonian Group of Companies. For more info, visit www.urbanathletics.com.ph, or be their fan on Facebook and Twitter.

DADA brand manager Mari Vivas with Filipino music artists Gary Reza (left) and Alex Bruno

JULIUS Arroyo, Guitar Daniels of Sun Beds Red Line, Alex of LDP

URBAN Athletics marketing officer Lawrence Navarro with Dhe and Bruce of Turbulence Productions

MICCUI Limos, Gene Boccard Rae Concordato of Urban Athletic

The MEDICard Health and Wellness Bulletin

Take Charge, Doc!

HIV/AIDS: AM I AT RISK FOR INFECTION?

Anyone of any age, race, sex or sexual orientation can be infected, but you are at greatest risk of HIV/AIDS if you:

• **Have unprotected sex.** Unprotected sex means having sex without using a new latex or polyurethane condom every time. Anal sex is more risky than a vaginal sex. The risk increases if you have multiple sexual partners.

• **Have another STI.** Many sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) produce open sores on your genitals. These sores act as doorways for HIV to enter your body.

• **Use Intravenous Drugs.** People who use intravenous drugs often share needles and syringes. This exposes them to droplets of other people's blood.

Remember: Each time you sleep with someone, you also sleep with their past. Be aware. Be safe. Protect yourself.

Trivia:

Did you know that condoms are depicted on male hieroglyphics dating back to ancient Egypt? Goodness sakes! In the early 1900s were made from linen, lining animal intestines or membranes, and some were even made from animal. The first modern condom were made from rubber and produced by Goodyear.

• Log on to www.medicard.com.ph

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Never stand up again to return to the buffet–it would be a great injustice to your waistline

Feast without going overboard

IS IT POSSIBLE? It's only human, as they say, to want everything. During the holidays and in the midst of entertaining, one is often confronted with a constant dilemma. Feast or fast? Fatty or personal? Believe it or not, there is a way we both indulge your cravings while watching the waistline.

Here are some practical ways to treat yourself without being sorry for indulging your whims.

1. Have sip—Any food that is high in fiber is your best defense against weight gain. If you load up on vegetables and low sugar fruits, you are well on your way to eating guiltlessly.

2. Load up, location—When at a buffet, stand in the middle, not at the start or end of the long table. Why? Because this is the best vantage point. From where you are now the spread—like a smile, your eyes should sweep through the table to zero in on the good offerings. Hey good, I mean healthy.

Some people have the habit of lining up where everyone is; thus, if your hunger pangs attack while you are at the end of the line, the tendency is to pile up your plate with the first thing you see. Statistically, it's the unfortunates, like pasta and rice. You leave the rest of the array—by the time you reach the vegetables, your plate is too full to accommodate anything else. It's less you do the wisest thing which is to get a second plate.

3. Don't go for seconds... Time is a law that should not be broken. Never stand up again to return to the buffet, unless it's to go for your main course. Count to enough. Going back to reach out for more food is a great injustice to your waistline. Eating many little things is better than eating a lot of the heavy fare.

4. Take your time...It takes 15-20 minutes for your brain to receive signals from the stomach that it is full. So, eat at leisure, not in haste. Eat somewhere out there and gain faster than slow eaters, who take their time to munch on their food.

5. Be choosy as metabolism...It's great! Talkative people tend to prefer the food on their plates, finishing the table conversation more delicious than the best spun stuff. So be charming, raucous and engaging. It helps keep you slim.

Bitter foods

6. Go for the bitter—Much as it may seem disappointing to some, eating bitter foods help metabolize the sugars contained in your meal. Are tomatoes, sweet-and-sour pork, bitter gourd (ampalaya), arugula, green mango, green papaya, green apples.

Remember: If you keep your sugar levels stable, then chances are you will not gain weight.

7. Spice up!—The more chili you eat with your meal, the faster your metabolism moves to burn the calories. Try to have 2 tbsp of chili sauce on the side. I couldn't be convincing 2-3 tbsp of chili sauce every meal time. But that's because I enjoy chili so much that a meal cannot be complete without it.

8. Compensate—If you decide to indulge today beyond your limit, then make up for it on your next meal by limiting back on your portions.

9. Think small—small portions are better than big ones. This way you can eat a little bit of everything. Remember, food can be your friend unless you turn it into an enemy. And that's why they call a banquet a feast.

You can feast on anything with out going overboard.

10. Love yourself now...It's never too late to express love to yourself through kindness. Bring kind to your body is one of the greatest chemical actions of love. Show kindness treatment to eating nutritious, healthy food.

11. Love others—Preparing a banquet that offers everyone a range of food choices that cater to their likeness and preferences is likewise love demonstrated through thoughtfulness. Its be a thoughtful and considerate host. You will be better appreciated by this. After all is said and done, here's a dessert recipe.

Drumming Rosie
½ slices of fresh ginger
1 whole green apple
1 whole alphonso
1 whole mapahon
Juice and drink up!
Affirm today: My heart is the emotion of kind love here.
Love and light!

Keep the weight off–and win an iPad 2

RENOIR (generic name optional) is giving away 60 iPad 2 units to lucky members of the festival seraglio from club, Club Sow You.

Club Sow You was launched last May for all festival users, to assist and accompany them on their weight loss journey by giving them a venue to share their success stories, concerns and questions. Through Club Sow You, festival users can also get a special membership card with which they can avail of great discounts and rewards points for their purchases, and also be updated on any new and exciting offerings and promotions.

The holiday season, Club Sow You is giving members an added holiday special bonus by raffling off 60 units of the new iPad 2. The concern is open to all Club Sow You existing members and new members.

Just purchase a box of 25 cupcakes or the 9+1 promo pack of festival to leading drugstores nationwide. Each box of 25 cupcakes will give you three raffle entries, while at 9+1 promo pack will give you a raffle entry. Scratch off the protective ink on the Club Sow You sticker on the outside of the box to receive your unique 12-character code.

Visit www.sowyou.com.ph and log in or your account or create one if you are a new member.

Every two weeks, one lucky winners of a brand-new iPad 2 will be selected randomly from among the accumulated codes having that period, and shown on the website and Facebook page.

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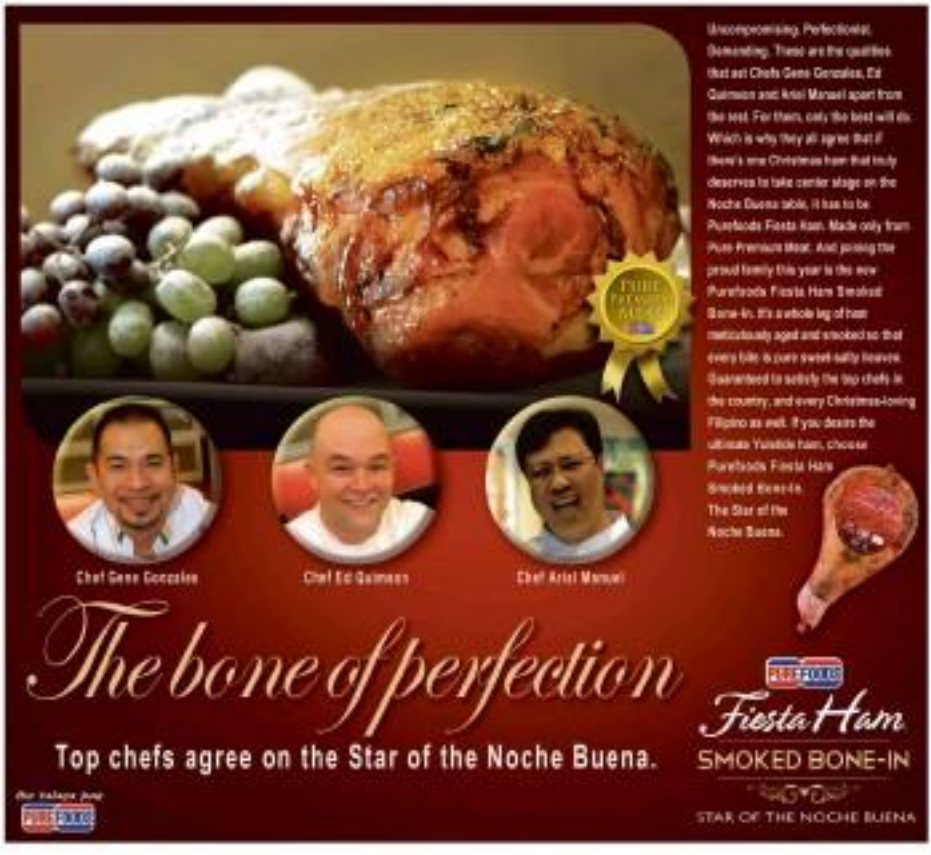

ENTERTAINMENT

Julie Bonnin G. Velarde

Singer-actress Alza Segueira

"I WISH for strength, as I face challenges that will come my way. I wish to grow more as a singer and write more songs next year. I hope that whatever I wish for will come true."

Marinel R. Cruz

WISHLIST

Stress-busting Yuletide music

By Pocholo Concepcion

Libera

"The Christmas Album"
(Sony/BMG Records)

REVIEW

IF CHRISTMAS is for children, it should follow that Yuletide music is best sung by kids. "The Christmas Album" by the all-boys British choir Libera has a magical, calming effect on the senses, especially "Still, Still, Still"—only sultry sax, heartfelt folk tone, which evocates the peaceful vibe surrounding the Madonna and Child on the first Christmas.

Almost all the tracks are scenic busters, like "Veni, Veni Emmanuel," "O Holy Night," "White Christmas," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "The First Nowell," "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" and "Lullaby (Goodnight My Angel)"—although they won't necessarily put you to sleep. What it is bound to do is to remind you of the joy and innocence of childhood as your own kid partners about.

On the other hand, "Carol of the Bells" and "Es Dakit Jehda" (German and Latin for "never mind, sing") deliver a kick like freshly brewed coffee—sort of tells you to move your butt and help out in the kitchen for melechismo.

Michael Bublé

"Christmas"
(Reprise/ Music Philippines)

Michael Bublé is 36 but, in this album, he goes back to his childhood years listening to Bing Crosby sing Christmas carols. Indeed he sounds eerily like Crosby in many tracks. But what makes this CD a must-buy is the bright, cheerful music that producer David Foster employs—with invaluable backup from a battery of musicians including an orchestra (though the credits don't mention who played in the string and brass sections).

It's impossible to imagine that Foster merely supplanted the blast of trumpets in "Santa Claus is Coming To Town" and the swinging outro in "Jingle Bells" on keyboards, because they do sound live.

Bublé's duet with Shania Twain in "White Christmas" is pure delight, as the hip band arrangement urging you to pick up the spoons and slow-dance with wine in hand. Surely there will be tight hugging when "Santa Baby" comes on, and still you can't stop dancing to "Holly Jolly Christmas" because the lead guitar and electric duo rise.

It's best to save up the volume in the Phil Spector classic, "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)," as well as the bouncy "Blue Christmas." "Cold December Night" and the Latin-flavored "Mr. Drums/Feliz Navidad" (Bublé's duet with "Muppets" star Thalia, which he also executes). This only means that this CD is perfect for holiday party noise.

But it still sounds great when the guests are gone, if only for the solemn "Ave Maria."

Gavin Concepcion

"Gavin Concepcion"
(Star Records)

This self-titled debut CD by Gabby Concepcion's daughter with Grace Ibuna is not a Christmas record, though it's also brimming with youthful verve. The first three tracks—"Baby Run Run," "Bitaw" and "Bahala Lang Siya"—mostly 21-year-old Gavin Concepcion's entry into the music scene, her voice sounding fresh and engaging, if a bit rookie.

However, the listener may wonder what causes the use of the songs to drag: Is it the lyrics, most of which were written by Edith Gallardo, or the music, which relies on the balladeer's way of syncopating on the budget by hiring one or two musicians to program all instruments via keyboards?

On the other hand, Imbachs can't be faulted for coming up with cliche lines about starry-eyed emotions, when pro-lover Vivian Velez is dressed fit for Gavin's age. But then, who says a young woman like her can't sing about other things?

It's not only as cell lone Gavin's career will play out, but perhaps for her families (Backstreet and Boyz herself) may see the wisdom of exposing the singer to as much music by the great songwriters as possible, so that she will be ready to explore more exciting stuff in no time. And that includes inviting the best musicians to jam with her, too.

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

Ang Panday 2

(We are running this guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema runs: The 37th MMFF runs from December 25 to Jan. 7, 2012.)

Directed by Mac Alejandre; stars Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., Iza Calzado, Marian Rivera, Phillip Salvador, Addie Garcia, Rhian Ramos, Bembi Pavia, Eric Reveral.

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The Perfect Venue

Ang Panday 2

from page B1

Aljon Jimenez, Joross Gamboa, Jake Vargas, Jhong Hilario, Bubble Gonzales, Bubble Gonzalez, Ingrid Dela Paz, Isabel Frial

The epic saga of Flavio, the noble blacksmith, Dimitri, continues as he joins forces with old and new friends in his quest against the evil tyrant Lizardo Dalandan. Pendragon Film and Imus Productions assure that they've pulled out all the stops for this latest edition of the fantasy franchise. Avella revealed that a big chunk was gathered to mark on the film as early as a year ago. Exotic the production design group led by Richard Somes is the visual effects wizards of Rise Inc. Creative Guru J. Capacao exhibit that the movie's special effects and production values have surpassed every to-date's movie. Terrific. Books it's his duty to offer nothing but the very best this holiday season. "My strong (godfather) Fernando Poe Jr. gave me his blessing to carry the 'Panday' torch," he says. "I owe it to him to do justice of the character and the franchise."

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MOVIE TIME

Cinemas 6

1) LION KING (3D)
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) NEW YEAR'S EVE
5) IMMORTALS
6) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4 (3D)
7) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4

Greenbelt 1

1) NEW YEAR'S EVE
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4

Greenbelt 3

1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) NEW YEAR'S EVE
4) LION KING (3D)
5) IMMORTALS

Alabang Town Center

1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) LION KING (3D)
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4 (3D)
4) IMMORTALS
5) NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ayala Center Cebu

1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) IMMORTALS
3) LION KING (3D)
4) NEW YEAR'S EVE

Marquee

1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) LION KING (3D), MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) NEW YEAR'S EVE
4) IMMORTALS

Market! Market!

1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4 (3D)
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) NEW YEAR'S EVE
4) LION KING (3D)
5) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
6) IMMORTALS
7) RESERVED

Trinoma

1) IMMORTALS
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) LION KING (3D)
5) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
6) NEW YEAR'S EVE
7) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4

Abreeza

1) LION KING (3D), MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) IMMORTALS
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) NEW YEAR'S EVE

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MOVIE SPECIAL

MALL EVENTS

Glorietta
Greenbelt
Market! Market!
Alabang Town Center
Ayala Center Cebu
Bonifacio High Street
Trinoma
Marquee
Abreeza

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Grace Poe on dad FPJ: History can be rewritten

MY MIND went on flashback mode when I visited the mausoleum of The Batasan Pambansa Hon. Jr.'s at the Manila Cemetery on his seventh death anniversary last Dec. 14. I couldn't have been so cruel to call my Pinay barmate at weddings. I usually stand in for my mom as setmate. And when enough, This Boy would also be second as setmate.

His stay gracious daughter, Mary Grace Poe-Llamanzares, sees the new taking charge during the rites. Maybe my focus was conspicuously missing, according to Mary Grace, her mom would rather visit when there are no attendees around.

How does she feel about the turn of events? "She family is happy that the wheels of justice are turning," she said. "Just like in any sport, whether you there by 1 or 10 points, you still lose. With the positive outcome now, history can be rewritten and the wrongs can finally be made right."

What does this mean most about her dad, especially now that it's Christmas? "I miss his jokes," she recalled.

"He's always been so playful and care free. I miss how he plays Santa to all of us, especially to the kids."

Does she talk any values she treasures here her dad? "It's more of a perspective," she said. "I always ask him to give me guidance and strength."

Is she close to her half-sister Lovi Poe? "I can't say that Lovi and I are classmates," she noted. "But we stopped each other. We come from different generations but we share the same sentiments about our dad. I am glad to see her making a name for herself. And just like me, I know she wouldn't let us anything to tarnish our dad's name."

On a lighter note, I asked her if she would allow her son Brian to artist show biz since he's quite a looker like her dad? "Maybe I'd like him to have certain restrictions," she said. "But not entirely a uniform copy. It would be kinda weird to be younger, really involved with a chorus of my dad. I'm during but not ready for anything serious yet. I'd like to balance Pia and everything when it comes to love, so hopefully my heart won't get broken again. Kinakabahan na kasi ako magbalang sa kanya para I will meet my match if and when the time is right and my heart is ready."

Her love life is on hold. What about her career? Is there truth to the buzz that she's not too happy with the way GMA 7 is handling her? "I'm thankful that the network always gives me projects," she clarified. "But I feel that I'm a bit underutilized. But as a result I can give. Hopefully in 2012, they will give me bigger projects. So far I'm still a Kapuso (laughs)."

GMA 7 ought to reconsider Isa's talent before another station does. Any mga taong ito? Bigyan ito ng mga magandang project!

Zero guilt

"We're all guilty of Christmas binging. 'Tis the season to eat plenty.

Thank God Mars Pelaez came to my rescue and sent me a box of yummy, healthy, beyond-chips. "Your a couple of bags," she said. "It's my way of saying thank you for your support. Zero guilt, Zero guilt," Mars said. "It's high in protein, calcium and fiber and low in sodium and fat and has zero trans fat. It's really beneficial to us." Would Mars's body lie to you? Let his abs do the talking.

E-mail: wearethebalongtrio@yahoo.com

Christmas albums still top sellers

TOP SELLING albums in the country for the week Dec. 5-11, based on Odyssey Music & Video's nationwide sales reports:

OPM

1) Various Artists, "It's a Wida Wida Christmas," Ivory Music; 2) Bamboo, "Tie Wires, No Mom," Dolphfast Records; 3) Slapshock, "Kimo Kalbo," Polyfloss; 4) Angeline Quinto, "Wala Ay Ang Pangarap," Star Records; 5) Various Artists, "Smash Christmas," MCA Music;

6) Jose Mari Chan, "Christmas In Our Hearts," Universal Records; 7) Various Artists, "Non-stop Filipino Xmas Medley," Ammo Ball, ABS; 8) Martin Nievera, "Simply Big Handsome," Polyfloss;

9) Kuh Ledesma, "Pasaporte," Universal; 10) Gary Valenciano, "With Love, Sue

Overall

1) Various Artists, "Para ...Christmas," Sony Music; 2) Various Artists, "It's a Wida Wida Christmas," Ivory;

3) Bamboo, "Tie Wires, No Mom," Dolphfast; 4) Slapshock, "Kimo Kalbo," Polyfloss;

5) Angeline Quinto, "Parolay Ang Pangarap," Star

6) Justin Bieber, "Under The Mistletoe," MCA Music; 7) Various Artists, "Smash Christmas," ABS; 8) Taylor Swift, "Speak Now World Tour Live," MCA; 9) Jose Mari Chan, "Christmas In Our Hearts," Universal; 10) Adele, "21," Warner

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